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*The Girl the Son Married.*

# Letters *from a Son to* His Self-Made Father

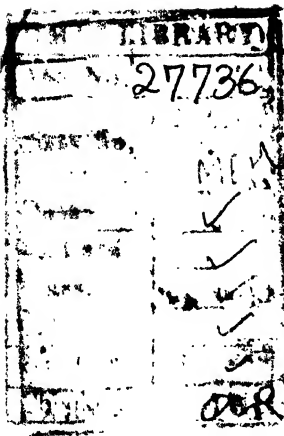
By  
CHARLES EUSTACE MERRIMAN

BEING *the* REPLIES *to*  
LETTERS *from a* SELF-MADE  
MERCHANT *to his* SON

*Illustrations by*  
FRED KULZ

*London : G. P. Putnam's Sons*  
*Boston : Robinson, Luce Company*

1904



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*TO*  
**Mark Twain**  
*A READY-MADE WIT*





## ILLUSTRATIONS.

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*"The Son" in College.*

*His College Girl.*

*"The Son" as a Travelling Salesman.*

*His Society Girl.*

*"The Son" as Manager of His Father's Pork-  
packing Establishment.*

*The Girl He Marries.*



**LETTER NO. I.**



## LETTER No. I.

*Pierrepont Graham, a newly fledged Freshman at Harvard, writes his father, John, in Chicago, how he and the University are getting along together.*

CAMBRIDGE, Oct. 10, 189—

*Dear Father :*

I know you will accuse me of lack of the business promptness which is the red label on your brand of success, but I really couldn't answer your letter before. I have been trying to reconcile your maxims of life with the real thing, and I had to get busy and keep so. Reconciliation has not yet come, leastwise not so as you would notice it.

I'm glad Ma got back safe to the stock-yards, for when she left Cambridge that morning she didn't quite feel as if she would. I thought she had too large a roll to be travelling around the country with, and convinced her that she ought to leave all but \$8 and her return ticket with me. Its a great thing to have a good mother.

I have already taken quite a course in art, fitting up my new flat; the fellows go in quite strong for art here, and it really is one of the most expensive courses in the curriculum, for although the photographers make special rates to the students, models come high.

You will be glad to hear that I shook the room in College Hall that Ma picked out for me, and by extraordinary luck secured a small apartment of five rooms and bath in one of the big dormitories. The dingy hole in "College" was so horribly noisy that I found it impossible to do my best work. The building was fairly infested with "pluggers," whose grinding made day and night hideous. Here I can work in peace and get a raft of culture from my art studies and other beautiful surroundings. I have had the bill for fitting up forwarded to you. Please settle within thirty days, or I shall be terribly disturbed in my course.

Tell Ma not to worry about my over-studying. I have too much inherited common sense for that. It's a wise pig that knows when he is being crammed for John Graham's lightning sausage developer; I've heard the squeal. As for under-study

— well, as Kip says, that's another floor to the building.

I fail to find education as "good and plenty" at Harvard as you seem to think it. Some of it may be good, but it certainly isn't plenty, and it isn't passed around with the term bills. There's a fellow in our dormitory — one of the "pluggers" who escaped from College Hall — who is hot after education, and they say he has to dig for it. I haven't dug yet, although I had a spade given me last night. Unfortunately, what I needed just then was a club.

You will be pleased to hear that I have already added several extra elective courses to my studies. I am especially interested in the topography course, in which we are making a careful study of Boston streets. I am glad to say that I am making rapid strides in the same. For this no text-books are required, but the experimental apparatus is quite expensive. On our last tour of inspection we all required lanterns. I paid \$10 and costs for mine, and it stood me \$5 more to square things with the driver of the herdic for a window broken while making a particularly interesting experiment.

I feel that I am learning rapidly. I know



the value of money as never before. Money talks here quite as much as in Chicago; not so loudly, perhaps, but faster. As you have always advised me to be sociable, I find it pretty lively work keeping up my share in the pecuniary conversation, especially as in all our little gatherings there are always several fellows whose money doesn't talk even in signs.

Taking it by and large, as you say so often, Harvard seems all right, although the fellows say the term hasn't really opened, as there's nothing doing yet in the legitimate drama in the Boston theatres. They have a queer custom of colloquial abbreviation here—they call it "leg. drama," or "leg. show." Curious, isn't it?

If you value my peace of mind, dear father, don't write any more educated pig stories to me. Such anecdotes strike me as verging close on personalities. In fact, the whole pig question just now hits me in a tender spot. Even the pen I am using makes me shudder. I hate to look a gift hog in the mouth, but I wish you had made your money in coal or patent medicine, or anything that wasn't porcine. Fact is, I've got a nickname out of your business, and

it'll stick so that even your boss hogman, Milligan, couldn't scald it off.

You see, I board at Memorial Hall with about 1199 other hungry wretches, and let me tell you that your yarns about old Lem Hostitter and his skin-bruised hams wouldn't go for a cent here. Memorial is the limit for bad grub, and thereby hangs a curly tail. The other day at dinner, things were so rotten that an indignation meeting was held on the spot, and a committee of investigation was appointed to go to the kitchen and see what kind of vile stuff was being shovelled at us.

There must have been a rough-house in the culinary cellar, for we heard a tremendous racket in which the crash of crockery and the banging of tin predominated. Pretty soon the committee came back bringing a dozen or so of cans, waving them about and yelling like Indians. When they got near enough for me to see, I shuddered, for on every blessed can of them was your label, father — that old red steer pawing the ground as if he smelt something bad.

Just one table away from me the gang stopped, and a fat senior they call "Hippo" Smith rapped for order. Even the girls in the gallery quit gabbling.

"Gentlemen," yelled the senior, "your committee begs leave to report that it has discovered the abominable truck that has been ruining our palates and torturing our vitals. It's these cans of trichinated pork, unclassable sausages and mildewed beef that have made life a saturnalia of dyspepsia for us, and every one of 'em bears the label 'Graham & Company, Chicago.'"

Then you ought to have heard the roaring.

"Down with Graham & Co.!" "Let's go to Chicago and lynch Graham." "Confounded old skinflint!" the fellows shouted. I turned pale and thought what a narrow escape I was having.

Just then up got little "Bud" Hoover, old Doc's grandson, whom you have always held up to me as a model of truth-telling you know. Bud's a sophomore, and thinks he's a bigger man than old Eliot.

"Here's Graham's son," he piped in his rat-tail-file voice that you could hear over all the rumpus, and pointing right at me, "Ask him about it."

There was nothing for it for me but to get up and defend the family honor. As I was about to speak I saw another fellow running in from the kitchen with a big ham,

yellow covered and bearing a big red label, — your label. I had a great inspiration. I felt that ham would prove our salvation.

“Gentlemen, I *am* the son of John Graham,” I said haughtily, “and glad of it, for he has got more dough than this whole blamed college is worth; and, to show that you’re all wrong, I’m going to quote something that he wrote me last week. Just you listen:

“‘If you’ll probe into a thing which looks sweet and sound on the skin to see if you can’t fetch up a sour smell from around the bone, you’ll be all right.’”

That hit ’em in great shape, and “Hippo” Smith took a big carver and slashed the ham into shoe-strings in about thirty seconds. Then he lifted the bone to his nose and let out a yell that sent all the girls upstairs flying. The other fellows sniffed and bellowed with him.

The next thing I knew the bone landed violently on my neck and the air was full of tin cans, four of which met splendid interference from my head. When I came to I could hear four hundred voices shouting “Piggy, piggy, oowee, oowee oowee,” at me, and I knew I had passed through a

baptism of rapid fire. They were the "roast beef and blood-gravy boys" you mentioned in your letter, for sure.

The surgeon's bill is \$75, which I know you will pay cheerfully for my gallant defense of the house. But I wish you'd put up better stuff. Your label is a dandy, but couldn't you economize in lithographs and buy better pigs? By the way, the fellows have nicknamed you the "Ham-fat Philosopher." The letter did it. But don't feel hurt; I've already almost got used to being called "Piggy" myself.

I am appreciating more and more the golden truths of your cold storage precepts. As you say "Right and wrong don't need to be labelled for a boy with a good conscience." Good consciences must be scarce around here, for on the other side of Harvard Bridge they label wrong with red lights, and I've failed to find a fellow yet who is color blind.

In my pursuit of knowledge I have made the acquaintance of quite a number of the police force. They seem to me to be an undiscerning lot. For instance, I heard one of them say the other day that Harvard turned out fools. This isn't true, for, to

my certain knowledge, there are quite a number of fools who have been in the University several years.

I am unable to write at any further length this evening, as I must attend a lecture in Course XIII. on Banks and Banking, by Professor Pharo.

Your affectionate son,

PIERREPONT GRAHAM.

P.S. I am trying hard to be a good scholar, and am really learning a thing or two. But I respect your anxiety that I should also be "a good, clean man," and almost every Sunday morning I wake up in a Turkish bath.



**LETTER NO. II.**





## LETTER No. II.

*Pierrepont's University progress along rather unique lines is duly chronicled for the paternal information, and some rather thrilling experiences are noted.*

CAMBRIDGE, May 7, 189—

*Dear Dad:*

I am sincerely sorry my last expense account has made you round-shouldered. I should think you pay your cashier well enough to let him take the burden of this sort of thing. Better try it when next month's bills come in, for I should hate to have a hump-backed father.

You haven't the worst end of this expense account business, by any means. If it makes you round-shouldered to look it over, as you say, you can just gamble a future in the short ribs of your dutiful son that it made me cross-eyed to put it together. You see there are so many items that a Philistine—that's what Professor Wendell calls men who haven't been to Harvard—couldn't be expected to under-

stand. I was afraid that \$150 for incidental expenses in the Ethnological course wouldn't be quite clear to you. It may be necessary to tell you that Ethnology is the study of races, and the text-books are very costly and hard to procure. But the fellows are very fond of the course; it is so full of human interest that it is a real pastime for them. In fact, they sportively call it "playing the races," to the great delight of dear old Professor Bookmaker, our instructor.

Your suggestion that I appear to be trying to buy Cambridge proves you are not posted on conditions here. I am, and I may say *en passant*, the conditions are also posted on me — the Dean sees to that. I wouldn't buy Cambridge if it were for sale. I never had any taste for antiques. There are purchasable things in Boston far more attractive; if you will come on I'll be glad to let you look 'em over. I like Cambridge well enough daytimes, but the most interesting thing in it is the electric car that runs to Boston.

I realize that my expenses grow heavier each month, but money not only has wings, but swims like a duck, and the fashionable

fluid to float it is costly. I'm really beginning to believe that a man who can read, write and speak seven or eight languages may be an utter failure unless he's able to say "No" in at least one of them.

The problem of how to get rich has not yet been reached in the Higher Mathematics course and so it's not worrying me, as you seem to think. But of course I don't want to cast reflections on the solvency of the house of Graham & Co., so I try to keep my end up. It's expensive, for there are fellows here who've got bigger fools than I have for—but this wasn't what I started to say. All men may be born equal, but they get over it a good sight easier than they do the measles; and while some of the fellows have to study in cold rooms, others have money to burn. Poverty may not be a crime, but it's a grave misdemeanor in Cambridge.

I am grieved, my dear father, to have you say that you haven't noticed any signs of my taking honors here at Cambridge. You cannot have read the society columns of the Boston papers, or you would have seen that I have already a degree from the Cotillion Society, as being a proficient

student of the German; am entitled to the letters B.A.A. after my name — a privilege granted by a learned Boston organization after very severe tests, and have been extended the freedom of Boston Common by the aldermen of the city. If these things don't justify the inking up of a few pink slips, you can souse my knuckles. It grieves me to have you fail to appreciate what I've accomplished. I am trying to do your credit,—what a foolish little slip; rub the "r" from "your" and you'll see my meaning.

Another thing that proves my high standing in college is the fact that I've been admitted to the D.K.E., playfully known here as the "Dicky," a very exclusive and high-toned literary and debating society, specially patronized by the Faculty. The initiation ceremonies are very curious, and I really believe you would laugh to see some of the innocent little pranks the new men cut up. They are sent around town and over into Boston dressed in quaint garb and instructed to ask roguish questions of any they meet. This is to give them self-possession in debate and calmness in facing the battles of life. It would meet with your hearty approval, I am sure.

For my little trial I was compelled to wear a yellow Mother Hubbard, with a belt of empty Graham & Co. tin cans fastened around my waist and a double rope of your sausages hanging from my neck. A silk hat completed the rig. Thus accounted I was told to promenade up and down Tremont street over in Boston, a swell walk opposite the Common, and bark like a dog. Every five minutes I had to button-hole some one and shout "Buy Graham & Co.'s pork products and you'll never use any others."

Well, the long and short of it is that I became a marked man on the gay boulevard. Small boys tendered me a free escort and made insulting remarks, which I endured cheerfully for the cause. It vexed me a bit, though, to find that one of the persons I advised as to our meats was Miss Vane of Chicago. She looked unutterable things and murmured something to her escort at which he smiled pityingly. If you hear that I drink, you will know exactly how the rumor started, and discredit it accordingly.

Finally the crowd around me became so dense that street traffic was blocked,

and I was taken in charge by a policeman for disorderly conduct. In another minute I was arrested by a meat inspector for exposing adulterated foods for sale. Between the two of them it was a simple little cot that night and a frugal breakfast next morning for Pierrepont. I was discharged on the disorderly conduct count, but fined \$100 and costs on the bad meat item. The judge ordered all the windows opened when it came into court. Father, it's up to Graham & Co. to make good the deficit in my month's allowance. As a philosopher, you will see the point, I am sure. Perhaps a little bonus for mental suffering will suggest itself to you.

I simply mention this in a general way to let you know how your pork products are regarded in the east, where the health laws are stricter than in Chicago. I would advise you to play harder for the Klondike trade and cut Boston off your drummers' maps. This is a bit of "thinking for the house" that I'm not charging anything for. It's sense, though, and you can coin it into dollars if you see fit.

Dear old father, always planning for my comfort and pecuniary welfare! You wrote

that when I have had my last handshake with John the Orangeman, I am to enter the Graham packing plant to lick postage stamps as a mailing clerk at \$8 a week. Honestly, dad, I don't feel worthy of so much. Make me an office boy at three per and let me grow up with the business. And I can't lick a postage stamp—really, I can't. Professor Plexus, our instructor in calisthenics, told me so the other day. He is a coarse and brutal man and I think I shall cut his elective out next semester.

But of course I shall accept your offer, although I should prefer a partnership, no matter how silent; for I shall be glad to be on hand in case anything should happen to you. Despite the law of averages you never can tell, you know.

As you say, there's plenty of room at the top. But that's where I'd like to start. I'd take all the chances of falling down the elevator well. Even if one starts at the bottom, he's not safe. The elevator may fall on him.

You say that Adam invented all the different ways in which a young man can make a fool of himself. If he did—which, with all due respect to you, pater, I



doubt — it's a wonder to me that Beelezebub didn't quit his job in Adam's favor. I have no doubt it pays to be good, but you know better than I do that it often takes a long time to get a business well established. Misdeeds may be sure to find you out, but if they do they'll call again.

I've devoted a good deal of thought to your maxims, which I realize to be sensible if homely, but, after all, if people practiced what other people preached, the preachers would have to take on a new line of goods. At all events I won't allow myself to worry. The man who's long on pessimism is usually short on liver pills. Misanthropy is only an aristocratic trade-mark for biliousness.

I don't do things just because the other fellows do, as you suggest, but for the sake of the family name I must observe the proprieties. Even in this I do not go to such extremes as the Afro-American gentleman who sells hot corn and "hot dogs" in Harvard Square in their respective seasons. His wife died a few weeks ago and he found it pretty hard to get a living and crap stakes without a laundress in the family. So he married a stout wench about

ten days ago. Last Sunday, says our janitor, who tells the story, his new wife asked him to go to church with her. "Go to church wid you, chile," he cried; "Bress de Lord, be'ent you got no moh sense ob de propri'ties dan to think dat I'd go to church wid annuder woman so soon after de death ob my wife?"

It is nearly midnight and I must close, for at twelve the art class meets at Soldiers Field to go and paint the John Harvard statue.

Your affectionate son,

PIERREPONT GRAHAM.

P.S. I wired you to-day for \$50. I couldn't explain by telegraph, but the fact is it cost me that sum to keep your name out of the police court records.



**LETTER NO. III.**



## LETTER No. III.

*Pierrepont, about to forsake Harvard, supplies his father with some reasons for agreeing with him that a post-graduate course is not advisable.*

CAMBRIDGE, June 4, 189—

*My Dear Father:*

No, you certainly need not get out a meat ax to elaborate your arguments against my taking a post-graduate course. What you have already said makes me feel as if a ham had fallen on me from the top of Pillsbury's grain elevator. There I go again with my similes derived from trade! It's exasperating how home associations will cling to a fellow even after four years of college life! But it's worse when these stock-yard phrases bulge out in polite conversation. It's a case of head-on collision with your pride, when you are doing your very neatest to impress some sugar-cured beauty that you are the flower of the flock, to make a break like a Texas steer. The

social circle was pretending to tell ages the other night. When it came my next, a pert little run-about, in a cherry waist and a pair of French shoes that must have come down to her from the original Cinderella, spoke up.

"And you, Mr. Graham, how old are you?"

"I was established in 187—" I said, with one of my fervid I'll-meet-you-in-the-conservatory-after-the-next-dance glances. But I never added the odd figure. Everybody laughed. Fortunately they thought I intended a joke. I'll bet you a new hat — if you are still sporting your old friend you need one — that you couldn't say "born." I caught the "established" from you.

I trust my education will do all that you hope for my advancement in business. I've read somewhere — perhaps in one of your meaty letters — that "good schooling is good capital." It may be, but the chances for investment are pretty poor hereabouts. Money is certainly more generally current. It may be the root of all evil, but I've noticed that it is a root that some very good people plant in the sunniest corner of their intellectual garden and keep well!

watered. While it may not be true that every man has his price, I note that many of those who do are ready to cut rates and give long time with discounts.

With your customary capacity for banging the spike on its topknot, you diagnose my future correctly. I admit that I'm "not going to be a poet or a professor." Even the Lampoon rejects my verses — though I am bound to say that if I wrote such hogwash as your street-car ad-smith grinds out, I would never dare criticise Alfred Austin again — while as for the professorial calling, there is nothing I could possibly teach except anatomy. We have had a splendid course in that at the various Boston amphitheatres, and the fellows say I'm way up on the subject. But I hardly think it serious enough for a life calling, so, as you so pleasantly intimate, I believe I will accept your offer to join fortunes with the packing-house. I think I know enough of Latin to decline pig — and I always do when it's our label — but circumstances of a strictly pecuniary nature make it advisable for me to close with you at once. Better an eight-dollar job and six o'clock dinner than a post-graduate course and free



lunch. While I'm not prepared to admit that my soul soars to the azure at the thought of being a pork packer, perhaps it is just as well. When I was a boy my ambition oscillated between keeping a candy store and being a hero. Now candy makes my teeth ache and I've seen two or three heroes.

I spent some time thinking what I had better do about meeting your desire that I desert literature for liver, but your last letter soldered my aspirations into a pretty small can. My chum doesn't like pork or relish my imminent intimate connection with it. Every day for a month he's asked me whether I had decided. To-day I answered him with a story that Deacon Skinner used to tell about a young minister he once knew. He was parson of a small country church that paid a pretty skimpy salary, mostly in vegetables his flock could not eat themselves. There was precious little marrying and everybody that died seemed to be on the funeral free list. Altogether it was a case of laboring in a vineyard that had gone to seed, and the young preacher was more often full of inspiration than of roast turkey and fixin's. But an

empty stomach made a clear head and the eloquence of his sermons would have given Demosthenes a hard run for first money.

You can't always hide away talent so that it can't be dug up, and one Sunday the outlook committee from a fashionable church came down to D -- and listened to the minister. His text that day happened to be one of those which permit of much oratory without enough orthodoxy to set the soul into convulsions. The sermon made a hit with a regular Harvard "H" and in a day or two the pastorate of the Wabash avenue church, whose steeple is nearer heaven than the majority of the congregation are likely to get, was offered to the young man, who told the committee that he must weigh the matter carefully.

The news spread through the village instantly, as it always does — for any country town has Marconi beat to a custard on wireless telegraphy — and on the afternoon of the day on which the call to the new field of labor came, the young minister's parishioners inaugurated a special pilgrimage to find out the prospects. The first arrival was a woman. (Strange, isn't it, that for all a

woman takes so long to dress, she can always give a man a killing handicap and beat him from scratch to the scene of a scandal or a bargain sale?) She was ushered into the parlor by the clergyman's little girl. No one else seemed to be visible. The Mother Eve in her wouldn't let the visitor wait long, so she put the little girl in the quiz box.

"I've heerd tell, Cicely, that your pa's been asked to go to a big church up to the city."

"Yes'm," answered Cicely, discreetly.

"Well, child, tell me, hev you heerd him say if he's a-goin'?"

"No, mam, I haven't."

"Nor your mother neither?"

"No, mam."

"Waal, my dear, you must know some-thin' abaout it. Dew you think he's a-goin' to leave us?"

The child squirmed about uneasily and twisted her fingers.

"Speak right out naow, that's a good girl. Be he a-goin' to go or stay?" urged the inquisitor.

"I don't know, mam, really. Papa's in his study praying for Divine guidance."

"Where's your mother?"

"Upstairs packing the trunks."

I simply mention this in a general way, father, and would note in addition that in the absence of mother the janitor has helped me do my packing. I decided it was best to agree with you, for I realize that it never pays a man to act like a fool; there are too many doing it as a regular business. While I should have liked a post-graduate course, with an elective or two from Radcliffe, I realize that the difference between firmness and obstinacy is that the first is the exercise of will power and the second of won't power. Give me a little vacation in Europe and I'll come home and let you can me as devilled ham if you want to.

I don't want to brag about myself, but I'll bet you'll be surprised in me. We've all been cured of bragging by a New Yorker in my class who spends all his spare time proving why Gotham should be the only real splash on the map. To hear him, you'd think the good Lord moved the sun up and down simply to accommodate New York's business hours. A fellow from Dublin who's here studying home rule took him down the other day. Gotham

was boasting of New York's high buildings when Dublin spoke up.

"Hoigh buildings, is it? Begorra, we've buildings in Dublin so tall that we have to put hinges on the four upper stories."

"What in the world is that for?" asked Gotham.

"To let the sun by so it can reach New York, av coorse."

By the way, you say that some men learn all they know from Life. If you refer to the New York publication, you must have met some very gloomy and dyspeptic individuals of late. I'm not of that sort, nor, on the other hand, am I bound up in books, although, if I do say it, I have the finest set of the Decameron in college, and am considered quite an authority on the poetry of Rabelais. While on the subject of literature, I ought to state that the extra \$100 in this month's expense account is for initiation fee and dues in the new Reading Club that a lot of us seniors have organized. We have for our motto Lord Bacon's great phrase "Reading maketh a full man," and it is wonderful to see how accurately the old philosopher hits our case. Owing to lack of accommodations here, we usually meet



*The Son in College.*



in some Boston hotel where we are safe from interruption. You would laugh to see how hot some of the fellows get arguing fine points. The other night I become so exercised myself discussing Schenck's "Theory of Straights" that I walked plumb into a pier glass, thinking I was up against another chap. I think the hotel man stuck us on the damages, but the Club chipped in and paid like little men. Despite such occasional drawbacks, the club meetings are very popular. In fact, we have full houses every time we get together.

Yes, that being elected president of my class was a good thing, for at last I can get my name on programmes and things without any reference to pigs tacked to it. But I don't know as it proves any overwhelming popularity on my part, for it was a dull season and I just slid in. Of course I would have liked to be marshal, but as I hadn't made any home runs and you wouldn't let me kick goals through your check-book, I was put on the mourners' bench so far as that ambition went.

I am glad to be able to write you the cheerful news that I shall graduate; up to last week there seemed to be considerable





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doubt about it in certain high quarters not far removed from Prexy's mansion. But I went over to see one of the influential overseers, a Boston Brahmin with moss on his front steps, and plead with him. I was finally obliged to promise him that you would leave Harvard \$100,000 by your will if he would see that I graduated. Of course it's a pretty stiff price, but as you won't have to pay it you ought not to mind. Besides, dad, think of the pleasure to Ma and the girls to have one real Commencement in their lives. It's cheap all round.

Your affectionate son,

PIERREPONT.

P.S. If my dream comes out and I get a diploma, I'll bring it home. It may be useful to you as a by-product. It's sheepskin, you know.

LETTER NO. IV.



## LETTER No. IV.

*From the Waldorf-Astoria, Pierrepont gives his  
father some inside information as to life  
and manners in New York and  
cites some experiences.*

WALDORF-ASTORIA, June 30, 189—

*My Dear Father :*

I used to think you had a strong sense of fun, but I am beginning to fear that long connection with such essentially un-humorous animals as hogs condemned to the guillotine, has dulled it. I say this because it is evident that you didn't take my little joke about wanting to go to Europe in the spirit I intended. The idea of suggesting to you, dear old practical pig-sticker that you are, that Europe was in it for a minute with a pork-packing house as a means of culture seemed so irresistibly comic to me that I thought you would roar with laughter also, and perhaps put another dollar on that eight per I am going to receive so soon. I can catch echoes of your roar even here, but I get no suggestion of cachinnation.

Really, the laugh is on me for attempting such a feeble joke. When I get fairly into the pork emporium, I shall confine my witty sallies to Milligan.

On the whole, and seriously, I'm glad you drew a red line through my scheme of letting the Old World see what a pork-packer's only looks like after his bristles have been scraped through college. Since I've been at the Waldorf-Astoria I've seen so many misguided results of a few days in London that I never want to cross the duck pond. Montie Searles, who graduated when I was a soph, was a tip-topper at Cambridge, but he unfortunately got the ocean fever. I met him in the palm room last night and the way he "deah boy"-ed me and worked his monocle overtime was pitiful. He's just got back and took the fastest steamer, for fear his British dialect would wear off before he got a chance to air it on Broadway. If I should borrow his clothes and come home in 'em you'd swap 'em for a straight-jacket. They are so English that boys play tag with him in the streets waiting to see the H's drop, and so loud that every time he goes out of the hotei an auto gets frightened and runs

away. After I left him last night I had to sing myself to sleep with "Hail Columbia."

Familiarity breeds contempt; no man is a hero to his own valet, and I'm afraid no son is taken seriously by his own father. For instance, you draw a pretty strong inference that I've never earned a dollar, which is hardly fair. I have earned considerable at times as a dealer in illustrated cards, and have picked up a tenner here and there by successfully predicting the results of various official speed tests. These things require hard labor and mental application. But the pay is sometimes uncertain, and on the whole I think your plan for me is better.

I told Searles about the packing-house job, and he pooh-poohed the idea. "Ma deah boy," he cried, "why don't you be independent? Try writing for money, old chap. That's what you were always doing in college." I'll bet he read that joke in Punch.

This is the greatest hotel in the world for one thing—in it you can meet a more varied assortment of people than under any one roof on earth. Billionaires jog elbows with impecunious upstarts who saunter



about the hotel corridors in evening clothes, and live on some cross street in hall-rooms way up under the eaves. There is one young fellow who haunts the hotel and looks like a swell, who is said to be only a few dress shirts shy of being a pauper. But he actually believes he's the real thing, and the story goes that to keep up his self-deception he goes home every afternoon, sits on his trunk and toots a horn, after cleaning his trousers with gasoline, and thinks he's been automobiling.

It's a long shot that you can't tell anything about a man in New York until you find out his business. He may look like a tramp and have curvature of the spine from carrying around certified checks, or he may seem the real thing in lords and only have a third interest in an ash collecting industry. I had an illustration last Sunday of how impossible it is to judge a man's motives until you know his business. I went to church—fact, I assure you. I saw a new style hat and followed its wearer into the sacred edifice, as I wanted to fix its details in my mind to tell mother. She—I mean it—was very pretty. On second thought I guess you'd better not mention

this to mother. In the course of his sermon the minister — one of those preachers who seem to think it necessary to shout out an occasional sentence to keep his congregation awake — declared in stentorian tones, "Wonders will never cease." A fat, bald-headed man in front of me nodded and murmured audibly, "Thank Heaven!" I wondered and asked the sexton who he was. It appears that he runs a dime museum on Sixth avenue.

Here's a straight tip for Sis. If she must marry a title let it be an American one, a Coal or Ice Baron. Counts and earls are thicker than sand fleas here and about as useless and annoying.

Speaking of straight tips, I've got a sure one on the horses sewed into the lining of my vest: If you want to go to the races without losing money don't take any money with you. The subject of money reminds me that your old Kansas friend, "Uncle" Seth Slocum was in town a day or two ago. With all due respect to him and his, you must admit that with his particularly flourishing facial lawn he looks more like a hayseed than a wheat king. At all events the head clerk tipped off a house detective to

keep an eye on him. They don't want any one robbed in the hotel — by outsiders. Seth hadn't been in town an hour, most of which he spent in telling me how he once got you into a corner on July wheat, when he remembered that he had an appointment down town and started out for the L. I went with him as far as the door, and as I stood there waiting for a cab, I saw a burly, flashily dressed man step up and grab Seth by the hand.

"How do you do, my dear Mr. Haymaker. How are all the folks at the Corners?" he cried.

Uncle Seth looked at him a moment and said, "Haven't you made a mistake?"

"In the name, perhaps, in the face, no," said the big chap, suavely. "Can it be possible that you are —"

Seth took hold of the fellow's lapel and drew him closer to him. "No, my name's not Haymaker nor am I from the Corners. Come closer. I've heerd tell a lot about those bunker men and I don't want any one to know my name, except you; you're such a likely chap."

The burly man laughed and inclined his head. Then, in a stage whisper that could

he heard a block, Uncle Seth said, solemnly, "Sh, don't breathe it. I'm Sherlock Holmes, disguised as the real thing in gold-brick targets, but don't give me away."

Uncle Seth nearly started a riot one day at luncheon. It had been very hot in the morning, but the wind changed and the temperature went down rapidly. Seth saw me at a table in the palm room and came over. "Well, Ponty, he shouted, in that grain-elevator voice of his, "quite a tumble, wasn't it? Dropped 15 points in half an hour." You ought to have seen 'em. It seemed as if every one in the room jumped to his feet in wild excitement. You see they thought he was talking stocks instead of thermometer.

By the way, Uncle Seth is infringing on your territory. He's going in for philosophy and gave me a little advice. "If you ever want to build up a big trade, Ponty," he said, "mix up a little soft soap with your business life. Flattery counts. There's a man here in New York who's made his pile as a barber because it is his invariable rule to ask every bald-headed man that he shaves if he'll have a shampoo."

I gather from your statement that my

allowance dies a violent death on July 15, that you are very anxious to see me on or about that date. You will. I have no desire to walk to Chicago, and my general mode of life trends toward Pullmans rather than freight cars. *Ad interim*, as we used to say in our debating societies, I think I shall run down to one of those jaw-twisting lakes in Maine to get some of New York soaked out of my system before dropping in on you. Billy Poindexter, a classmate of mine, has a camp there, and he writes me that hornpouts are biting like sixty, and mosquitoes like seventy. But I don't mind that, for I believe a little blood-letting will do me good after my stay here.

I like New York, even if it is a bit commonplace and straight-laced compared with Chicago. They are great on Sunday observance in 'this town, and I find I am gathering a little of the same spirit myself. For instance, at an auditorium called the Haymarket, there is always a devotional service very early on Sunday mornings. I attended yesterday, and was much attracted by the ceremonies and the music. You would be surprised to see the number of ladies who are willing to be absent from

their comfortable homes at such an inconvenient hour.

Say what you will, father, New York is a hospitable place. Although an utter stranger, I was invited the other night to the house of Mr. Canfield, a very wealthy gentleman who lives in great style. Mr. Canfield is well known as a philosopher who devotes a great deal of his time to the working out of the laws of chance and sequence. Beautiful experiments are made at his home every evening before a number of invited guests, among whom are some of the most prominent men in the city. It seems that it is the custom to have the youngest and least known guest contribute largely for the evening's entertainment, so naturally I went pretty deep into my available funds. I think I have just about enough to settle my hotel bill and buy my transportation to Lake Moose-something-or-other. It will be quite necessary that I hear from you at that point, and to the point, if you don't want me to become a lumberman or a Maine guide.

By the way, I've been observant and I've discovered something, though you'll doubtless not credit it. I see at last how so many

dunderheads marry pretty girls. Two of them — pretty girls, not dunderheads — were talking at the next table to me the other day.

“So she’s going to marry Dick Rogers, is she?” said one. “Poor thing! He’s awfully flat.”

“Well,” replied her companion, “he’s got a steam yacht, an auto, a string of saddle horses and his own golf links.”

“Ah, I see,” murmured her companion, “a flat with all the modern improvements.” Not bad for a New York girl, is it?

Your affectionate son,

P.

P. S. I met Colonel Blough the other evening and he invited me to sit in at a poker game. Of course I refused. He was surprised, said he supposed it ran in the family, and related the details of a little business transaction he and some other gentlemen had with you when you were last in New York. I hope mother is well. I am very anxious to see her. I think you’d be in line for repute as a philanthropist if you would send me a check for a hundred

**LETTER NO. V.**





## LETTER No. V.

*Pierrepont goes fishing and writes his father  
some of his experiences, not all of which,  
however, seem directly identified  
with the piscatorial art.*

LAKE MOOSE, ETC., ME., July 11, 189—

*Dear Dad:*

Here I am in a little hut by the water, writing on the bottom of a canned meat box — not our label, for I gave Billy a bit of wholesome advice as to packing foods, which he accepted on the ground that mine was expert testimony — a tallow candle flickering at my side, and the hoarse booming of bullfrogs outside furnishing an obligato to my thoughts. One particular bullfrog who resides here can make more noise than any Texas steer that ever struck Chicago. It isn't always the biggest animal that can make the loudest rumpus, as I sometimes fear you think. I simply mention this in passing that you may see that all the Graham philosophy isn't on one side of the house.

As a spot for rest this place has even Harvard skinned to death. It is so quiet here — when the frogs are out of action — that you can hear the march of time. Besides Billy Poindexter and our guide, Pete Sanderson, I don't believe there's another human being within a hundred miles. It's a great change from the Waldorf-Astoria, where you couldn't walk into the bar without getting another man's breath. The commissary department is different, too. The canned goods Billy bought are as bad as yours, dad, upon my soul, while as for fish, there's nothing come to the surface yet but hornpouts, and they'll do for just about once.

We have fried salt pork for a change and Pete makes biscuits that would make excellent adjuncts to deep sea fishing tackle. Altogether, this is great preparation for the packing-house, for I shall be so hungry by July 15 that I'll do anything to get a square meal. By the way, you haven't said anything on the subject of board — whether I could live at home on a complimentary meal ticket or be landed in a boarding-house and made to pay. I am going to write to Ma on this subject, for I think she

is a good deal stronger on the fatted calf business than you.

I think you would like to meet Pete Sanderson, for he's a veteran of the Civil War with a pension for complete disability, which he was awarded a little while ago. There isn't anything the matter with Pete except a few little scars, which he came by in a curious manner. It seems that he was examined by the pension board down at Bangor a few weeks back for complete paralysis. His home doctor swore that Pete couldn't move nor feel, and two strapping sons brought him to the office in their arms.

The other doctors punched and pounded him nearly to a jelly, but Pete never yipped. As a last resort they jabbed him with pins in a dozen different places, yet he didn't budge. Complete paralysis, they declared, but they didn't know that Pete had been stuffed so full of opium that he couldn't see nor feel, either. But he says he helped just as hard to save the nation as any one else, and ought to be recognized. At any rate his case is quite as worthy as that of the man who visited a Washington pension agency and sought government aid on the

ground that he had contracted gout from high living, due to his profits on army contracts.

Pete is a great hand to spring stories of the war on us, and some of them are pretty good. One he tells about the chaplain of the —— Mass., when that regiment was lying on the Rappahannock or Chickahominy, or some other river during the summer of '62. It seems that the chaplain was acting as postmaster for the men, and had been much bothered by requests for the mail, which had got tangled up with the Rebs somewhere. One hot afternoon he allowed to himself that he'd like a good snooze free from interruption, so he affixed to the front of his tent a placard that read thus :

CHAPLAIN DOESN'T KNOW WHEN THE MAIL WILL ARRIVE.
--

This worked like a charm, and the reverend soldier had a fine sleep and came out several hours later, greatly refreshed in body and mind. He was just a bit surprised to find a row of grinning privates

sitting outside his canvas residence, their eyes fixed on his warning in so noticeable a fashion that he himself turned to look at it. There, to his horror, mixed with amusement—for he was a very human sort of chaplain—he found that some wag had got at his card so that it now read:

CHAPLAIN DOESN'T KNOW WHEN THE MAIL WILL ARRIVE, AND DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN.
--

I merely mention this anecdote as evidence that a man cannot always be judged by what appear to be his deeds, as you seem to think, and that the devil often gives him a side wallop when he's engaged in perfectly innocent recreation.

Thanks to your kind little remembrance I shall be able to be officially introduced to Milligan on the 15th. I note that, through your customary forethought, the check is just sufficient to land me in Chicago with eleven cents in my pocket, provided I practice strict economy *en route*. Permit me to compliment you on being the most skillful promoter of labor any son ever had.

I have racked my brain in vain to think what I could have said in the letter of the Fourth of July to arouse your encomiums. Your assertion that it "said more to the number of words" than any letter you ever received from me suggests that it was brief. As it was written on the Fourth, a day that, as a good American, I always celebrate, its brevity may be accounted for. The same explanation, however, will scarcely answer for the condensed power of expression you note.

By the way, Poindexter isn't going to marry old Conway's widow, spite her millions. I quizzed him about it and he finally put me wise. "Yes, I could have married her," he said. "In fact, we agreed, but I squirmed out of it. The truth is I proposed by mail — I didn't have the nerve to do it face to face — and she accepted me on a postal card. Her evident economy was a bit too much for me."

I've done a lot of thinking (this word is not written very plainly, but it *is thinking* and nothing else) since I have been in the woods. Billy says I only think I'm thinking, but he's a cynic. There's been little to do but think. The hunting is worse

than the fishing and the only thing I've bagged is my trousers. The sum total of my thoughts seems to be a few resolutions. Although I know resolutions are not ripe till Jan. 1, I've had time to make them here and I'll have plenty of chance to get accustomed to them before I write them down in the Russia leather diary that I know you will be glad to include among my Christmas gifts.

My resolutions may not be original, they may not even be good ones, but such as they are I am going to write them out for you, for you have often told me that it was every man's duty to himself to set himself a goal and mark out the course by which to reach it. For this and a perfect wealth of other advice I can never thank you enough. Perhaps, however, the knowledge that I am really taking life seriously, as shown by my resolutions, will be some recompense to you for the midnight oil you have burned in the coinage of succinct sayings and meaty metaphors. (I flatter myself that is pretty well expressed, although my English professor would object, as he often did, to my employment of trade terms as illustrations and similes.)



The stain on this sheet of paper is due to Poindexter, who shied a slice of fat pork at my head while I was writing. That was yesterday and he absolutely refused to let me finish my letter. He said a man who couldn't find anything better to do in the woods than write was several unpleasant sounding things. As he emphasized his remarks by war-whoops, Comanche dances and the beating together of tin plates, I was forced to forsake my literary pursuits till this morning. Billy is asleep. He absolutely refused to rise without a pick-me-up and, as our canoe was upset last night, we lost all our camp utensils, including that indispensable adjunct to camp life, the pick-me-up.

Billy is up and insists that we must go to the nearest settlement for a new camp kit. He misses the splendid assortment of pick-me-ups with which we started out and swears he won't know north from south till he gets one. The resolutions will have to wait till we return.

July 13.

We did not get back till to-day. We found a fine collection of camp necessities at the settlement and what we selected

proved such a heavy burden that we were unable to start on the return trip till this morning. Billy is asleep again. I never knew he was such a heavy sleeper. It must be the bracing air of the woods. In Cambridge he had the reputation of never sleeping.

I have re-read the resolutions and I think it best not to send them to you until I am out of the woods. Surveyed in the light of this particular morning they seem to need as many amendments as the Constitution of the United States.

Just a word of warning not to be surprised when I show up for work in hunting costume. I was compelled to leave all my other clothes in New York for safe keeping. Storage rates are very high there; the tickets call for a payment of \$150. I shall call at the Waldorf on my way through the city and shall get any letters — with enclosures — that may be there.

Your hopeful son,

P.

P.S. Do you think that when a man finds he is catching two fish on one hook every time he hauls in his line it is time for him to stop using bait? Billy assures me that it is.



LETTER NO. VI.



## LETTER No. VI.

*The seat at his father's mailing desk does not appear especially comfortable to the Junior Graham, if we may judge by the tone of his correspondence.*

CHICAGO, Aug. 30, 189—

*My Dear Father :*

Permit me to say, most respectfully of course, that you are overdoing the emotional business as to my mistake in mailing a note of invitation to the theatre to Jim Donnelly in place of a letter denying his claim of shortage on hams, and denouncing him as a double-distilled prevaricator for venturing the same. As a matter of fact, it was a great stroke, and I've ordered the cashier in your name to put a two-dollar ell on my financial structure. Donnelly came in to-day and gave us a thousand-dollar order for short ribs; said he was devilish glad to find a bit of humanity and sentiment in the house of Graham, and that if you had more blood and less lard in your veins, Chicago would be a better place to live in. He's fond of

the old burgh, at that, for he licked a Boston drummer last week for claiming that the Boston Symphony Orchestra was better than Theodore Thomas'. You see Jim has just become engaged and my little break struck him in a tender spot.

I note with pain, dear dad, that you make a great hullabaloo over my robbing you of your time by writing that note. Theoretically you may be right, but practically your kick is so small that a respectable jack-rabbit would be ashamed of it. Let's see; I work — theoretically — from 8 to 6, one hour out for lunch. Under your munificent system of payment I get about 15 cents an hour, or a quarter of a cent a minute. It took me two minutes to write the note. Ergo, I owe you half a cent, whereas you owe me the profit on the thousand-dollar order of short ribs, which Donnelly says must be something immense. Let's square up on that basis.

But even had results been worse, absent-mindedness is a fault, not a crime. Literature is full of well-authenticated instances of that perversity of wit which makes one do the wrong thing instead of the much easier right one. The poet Cowper's feat

of boiling his watch while he timed it by an egg is really a very commonplace illustration of the vagaries of the human mind.

It was surpassed by Dean Stanley and Dr. Jowett, who were both extremely absent-minded and very fond of tea. One morning they breakfasted together and in their chat each of them drank seven or eight cups of tea. As the session broke up, Dr. Jowett happened to glance at the table. "Good gracious!" he exclaimed, "I forgot to put in the tea." Neither had noticed it.

Even this, I think, is excelled by the case of a remarkably absent-minded man in the western part of Massachusetts, whose freaks of memory made him the sport of the country for miles around. He once went for days without sleeping because he was very busy in his library and didn't leave it, so did not see his bed as a reminder. He capped the climax, however, when he came home one night and hanged himself to the bed-post by his suspenders. As he was wealthy and cheerful, with much to live for, it is generally believed that he mistook himself for his own pants. At all events absent-mindedness, like bad penmanship, is a sign of



genius, and, as a loving father, you should be glad that I have one of the symptoms.

I must frankly admit that the addressing of envelopes is not the most fascinating of pursuits. If I must write in order to earn my salary from the house, I should much prefer to do it across the bottom of checks. I would then feel that the business was more dependent upon me and also that it might mean more to me. It has got so that the sight of a U. S. stamp after business hours gives me a bilious attack. Let me at least fill out the checks if I don't sign 'em. Then I'll be better able to imagine that I'm the real thing around here, even if my salary's attenuation continues to eat a big hole in my sainted mother's pin money. The next best thing to owning an auto, you know, is to wear an auto coat.

Of course, Milligan made a noisy, braying, Hibernian ass of himself when he came around to take your cussing of him out on me. He swore and danced and waved his arms, and got still madder when I asked him what he was Donnybrooking around in Chicago for. He didn't seem to like it a bit when I told him that one little finger of the girl I wrote to, was worth a

thousand times as much as himself and the hogs he associated with, put together. He allowed that I was an impudent young jackass and the dead copy of my father; went on to say that if he hadn't started the firm and kept his weather-eye on it ever since, you would have been in the bankruptcy court or jail years ago. When I got mad and told him that I'd have him bounced, he said you didn't dare to fire him because he knew the secret of—but really I don't think it safe to entrust it to paper.

Milligan is a dirty beast who belongs to the Shy-of-Water tribe and smokes a horror of a clay pipe. To think that I, who have mingled with gentlemen for the past four years, should be compelled to breathe his air is too much. I won't work under a man who habitually insults my honored father. If you haven't pride enough to rebel, I have. He is vulgar enough to call you the "ould man," and I am morally certain he is a pretty liberal toucher of that private stock you keep in your inner office. For heaven's sake, throw him out and purify the place.

Jim Donnelly seems to have taken quite a shine to me, and last night he invited me

to his club for dinner. This was a great relief for yours truly, for between you and me, Ma has got pretty stingy with the table since you left, and is trying to use up a box of our products she found down cellar. (By the way, I notice from a slip Milligan gave me to file to-day, that you crossed off all the Graham foods the steward of your private car had picked out for your trip — wise old dad!) So Jim's invite was like an early cocktail to Col. R. E. Morse. After dinner we hied ourselves to a vaudeville show, which I simply mention in a business way. I see you've an "ad" on the drop curtain at the Hyperion, and if you won't kill the poet who wrote those verses, I must. Such awful rot as:

"We corral the choicest hogs,  
Stab 'em, scald 'em, flay 'em;  
Then you get the superfine  
Sausage made by Graham,"

may appeal to you as A1 inspiration, but trust an humble member of your family when he says that you simply nauseate the public by such tomfool stuff. You're rich enough to hire Howells if you like, so there's no excuse for this.

Wish I was with you on the car instead

of being compelled to hear Milligan blart about "our house" like an Irish Silas Wegg. They say around the office that the car is bully well stocked with things and things, and they even hint that you have been taking to it pretty regular of late to change climates with Ma. I don't encourage such idle talk.

I've worried a lot since you went away. The business seems to have got on my nerves. Of course I realize that all I have to do is to lick stamps and try to look as if I enjoyed it, but as the family heir I can't help worrying about the firm. Several matters have come to my attention, in the way of business, that make me fearful that perhaps you made a mistake in going away without leaving one of the family at the helm here. The Celtic gentleman who signs himself "Supt." and whom the boys call "Soup," does not take kindly to my advice. When I told him yesterday that I feared that a carload of lard that was shipped to Indiana was not first chop and would be returned, he looked me over curiously for a minute and said:

"Don't let that worry ye, me bye; the toime to fret is when they sind it back."

And then, in a very loud voice, so that everybody in the office could hear, he told me a story.

"Your anticipation av trouble reminds me," he said, "av an ould maid up in York state twinty years ago. She was so plaguey homely that if she'd been the lasht woman on earth the lasht man wud a jumped off it whin he met her. Arethusa Prudence Smylie — I've niver forgot the name, how cud I? — was as full av imagination as a Welsh rarebit is av nightmare, and ye niver cud tell phwat her nixt break wud be. She was sittin' in the kitchen one winter's day, radin' po'try and toastin' her fate in the open oven door, while her good ould slob av a mother was rollin' out pie crust, whin all av a suddint she burst out cryin'. This startled her mother so that she dropped her rollin' pin and rushed to her daughter's side. She thought she'd had a warnin' or cramps or somethin'. It was a long toime before she cud squeeze a worrd out edgewise bechune the wapes.

"Phwat is the matter?' she cried, agin and agin. Finally, wid the tears a streamin' down her chakes an' the sobs wrestlin wid her breath, Arathusa tuk her mother into

her confidence. 'I was sittin' here, radin', she said, 'whin the po'try suggisted some-thin' to me an' thin I got to thinkin', and here her gab trolley was trun off by sobs.

"'Thinkin' of phwat, darlint?' cried her mother.

"'Oh, mother, I was thinkin', as I sot here wid my feet in the open oven door, that if I should get married and a little baby should come and — and —' Agin she stopped to put on brakes wid her handkerchief, and thin wint on rapidly, 'I was thinkin' how terrible it would be if I should git married and should leave the baby here in the kitchin' and go out and — and it should crawl into the oven' an' you should shut it up wid the pies and — and — boo-hoo, hoo!'"

The point of this yarn appeared clear enough to the boys in the office, for they laughed like hyenas and looked at me as if I were the latest thing in tailor-mades. Strange how everybody knows when to laugh when the boss makes a joke! This morning one of the boys had the nerve to call me Arethusa. When I got through with him, in the vacant lot back of the hog pens, he couldn't have said "Arethusa" to

save his life. You will commend this, I know, for the dignity of the family name must be upheld. I found long ago that in order to maintain the respect of the world it is sometimes necessary to give it a few drop kicks.

I am disappointed in Milligan. Until recently I thought he really felt an interest in me. For instance, a day or two ago he expressed surprise that you had not established me in the real estate business, and said that it struck him that I was better suited for it than for the coarse details of pork-packing. After that I went round like a pouter pigeon. But I have since learned that he followed his remark about the real estate business with a side speech to one of the clerks: "He certainly knows more about the real estate business than he is likely to ever learn of this. He *can* tell the difference between a house and lot."

Milligan is so full of jokes that it's safe betting that if he had the shaking up I'd like to give him he'd shed comic operas, end-men's gags and "side-walk conversation" enough to keep the show business running for years to come. Do you wonder that I have written you several letters

demanding his resignation or acceptance of my own? You will not receive any of those letters, however, for home, although humble, is a place of shelter. I must say, though, that Milligan's *penchant* for presenting the naked truth without even the traditional fig leaf is annoying.

Your chafing son,

PIERREPONT.

P.S. I have just learned that Milligan is at home, sick. I wish him well, of course, but if he should find a change of climate necessary I will gladly hunt up the timetables for him.





LETTER NO. VII.



## LETTER No. VII.

*Picrrepoint writes of "independent work for the house" and its results; of the methods of "guide-books-to-success" philosophers, and of divers other topics.*

CHICAGO, Sept. 10, 189—

*Dear Father:*

What a clever, indulgent, far-seeing old boy you are, to be sure. Your ultimatum that I must continue to be subject to Milligan sounds harsh at first reading, but I see your motive. You think by keeping me under him for a while I shall work like a fiend to get promotion, and thus escape his Celtic cussedness. I shall. No greater incentive to rise was ever offered a poor young man. In fact, you couldn't keep me down with Mike if you gave me ten thousand a year. My lacerated feelings are worth much more than that.

Ma is a pretty good Samaritan these days. I told her that Milligan was my *bete noir*, and she said it was a mean shame for a grandson of her father to have to affiliate

with such an animal. Her sympathy cost her ten, but I feel that it was worth that to have her wellsprings of emotion tapped once more.

I see the logic of what you said in your last. True it is that if it isn't a Milligan over us, it's some one else—I won't say worse, for that would be lying. I have Mike, Mike has you, you have Ma, and Ma has Mrs. Grundy. We are all travelling over the ocean of life in the same boat, but I'm hanged if I wouldn't prefer to be in the first cabin drinking champagne, than down in the stoke-hole sweating like a galley slave.

I am sincerely glad you are coming home. The old adage about the mice playing when the cat's away is away off. Since you've been gone, except for the half day that your Brian Boru-descended super was sick, I've not even had time enough in office hours to devote an occasional few moments' thought to how I will improve methods here when you elect to add "re-tired" to your recital of personal facts for the city directory. The way Milligan keeps me jumping would have pinned all the Mott Haven medals on me, had his system

of training been adopted in Harvard athletics. I've lost seven pounds in three weeks, and if this thing keeps on I'll be so far under weight that I'll be sent out to pasture or to the boneyard.

I used to think Milligan a well-balanced man, but I was wrong,—no man whose lungs are so out of proportion to his brains can be. I'm getting used to being bossed, but I shall never be broke to being roared at in the fashion of the Bull of Bashan. I don't object to being told that it is necessary to have a state as a component part of the superscription on a letter,—but is it essential to the business code that the people in East Saginaw should have full particulars of my dereliction shouted at them?

Milligan takes especial delight in introducing me to all the visitors who inspect the works, but never by any chance does he tell who I am. Not a bit of it. "This is our new mailing clerk: he is just from Harvard," is the neat way he puts it. And then they look me over and say, "Harvard? Oh, indeed!" and the look passed out with it—you'd think I was a new line of prize pig. I've come to believe that I'm

under suspicion here in Chicago; and I've locked up all my college pins and insignia in a closet down cellar, and couldn't be roped into confession of my *alma mater* with a lariat. Education is evidently not a thing to brag of in Chicago.

I can't quite get on to what it is, but Milligan is up to some game. He's very chummy with the visitors and insists upon showing them about himself. An English lord who was here the other day, chatted with him for fully half an hour in your private office. Think of it—in your private office. I shall have it deodorized before you return. As usual, Milligan boasted and, as the door was open, we all heard. Something was said of the Irish land bill, and this opened the throttle of the super's conversation.

"It's no more than roight to do some-thin' for Ireland. Who won the Boer War for ye? Kitchener, Lord Roberts,—both Irish."

"Really, you don't tell me?" drawled his lordship. "And were all our great fighters Irishmen? Was — was Wellington?"

"Certainly," said Milligan.

"And Nelson?"

"Shure. All great fightin' min were Irish."

"How about Alexander?" asked the Englishman.

"Celtic, for shure."

"So? And say now, how about — well, Balaam?" lisped the peer.

"Irish," cried Milligan, Irish to the backbone. But — an' I asks ye to note this, your lordship — but the ass was English."

"I hate Milligan, but I love a joke, and I joined in the laugh that went up. Then I heard his lordship pipe up, "How delightful, don't yer know, that your clarks are so merry. I do wonder what they are laughing at."

Just then he toddled out and surveyed us through his monocle. As Milligan joined him he turned to him and said: "So Balaam was Irish, too, Mr. Milligan? But I really didn't know the ass was a native animal in my country."

Milligan certainly possesses self-control. He was as grave as a government inspector opening a Graham tin can as he replied, "Those laugh best who laugh last, your lordship."

By the way, there was a little excitement



in the packing house yesterday which you may hear of in some other way. I'll tell you the straight facts. I happened to be over in the refining house during the noon hour, to get some butterine for a sandwich, when a fellow with some sort of monkey togs blew in and acted in a very suspicious manner. He nosed around into the vats, poked a queer glass machine plumb through a keg of butterine, broke open some tins and raised particular Ned in the olive oil department. When he started to put some stuff in his pockets, I remembered your oft-repeated injunctions to occasionally do some independent work for the house—to get out of the ruts, as it were—and I came an old-time Soldier's Field tackle on his jiglets which resulted in his complete disappearance from the interior of the plant, and a compound fracture of the left shoulder-blade where he landed on the cobblestones of the yard. He cursed me as he was being carried away on a stretcher, and said the concern would hear from him to its sorrow.

I understand he's a government inspector, but I rely on your little way of settling such things. However, I think it

would be just as well that you cut your expedition in two and get around here by the time the plot thickens. If you don't care to go home so much sooner than you intended, you can live in the private car right here in the railroad yard, and I won't let Ma next. You would enjoy the surroundings immensely. Think of being lulled to sleep by the squealing of your own hogs and awakened in the morning by the music of Texas steers that are going into Graham cans.

Billy Poindexter is here for a day or two on a little trip from New York. He cut up horribly when I told him I couldn't get out to air myself all day long. But I pointed out to him that I was in training to carry Graham & Co. around on my shoulders one of these days, and he admitted that it looked like a good game to follow. I showed him one or two of your letters, and he said they were too clever for a pork-packer and too greasy for a philosopher. Asked if you weren't over-doing the "Beyond-the-Alps-lies-Italy" business a trifle, and allowed that too much watering has killed many a promising plant. However, I don't believe water will be the death

of me. Billy says my occupation would drive him to drink, but I guess he isn't on to my salary or else doesn't know the price of cabs out here. Besides, he doesn't need driving.

Billy has developed quite a philosophical streak lately. I guess the girl he really wanted for better or worse decided it a long shot for worse and scratched Billy in the running. I taxed him with it.

"Young man," said he — he's only fourteen months older than I, but how he does swell up over it — "Young man, the pursuit of a girl is like running after a street car and missing it. You're never quite sure that it was the right car, after all."

That's all I could coax out of him, but I guess he got the stuffed glove all right. The other night, after we had spent several hours in the Palmer House examining some very curiously shaped glasses and some quaintly embossed steins, Billy became pathetically confidential and imparted a secret to me.

"Piggy, my boy," he said, "I once cherished rainbow visions of being a great man some day, but I've given it up. After all, the only sure guarantee that you *are* a

great man is to have a five-cent cigar named after you and see them sold at the drug stores at seven for a quarter." The thought affected him so that he tried to conceal his emotion by hiding his face behind one of a couple of glasses that were just then submitted to our inspection.

If Billy only could set his mind on any thing he'd be sure to make a success at it; but the only thing he has ever tried to do is to help spend his governor's money, and he is certainly the entire ping-pong at that. He is of a companionable nature, however, and is not averse to assistance in his pecuniary labors. I help him all I can, and, to square things up a bit, I invited him to be my guest at the house during his stay here. He doesn't eat much, so the family exchequer will not be lowered materially. He never has any appetite for breakfast. Mother has cottoned to him as if he were an orphan. She likes me to be with him for his good example, for she knows that he doesn't drink, he's always so thirsty in the morning.

The other night at dinner Billy was very loquacious. He had been playing billiards all the afternoon, and there is something

connected with the game that always loosens his tongue. Somebody mentioned success, and that started William, for he always spells it with a big "S."

"Success is much easier to talk about than to discover," he said. "The man of affairs who undertakes to point out the path to it to a young man anxious to tread it, is like the average man of whom you ask directions in a large city, and who says, 'Well, but it's hard to tell a stranger. You'd better go up this street till you come to the City Hall, then take the first street to the right and the second to the left and — and then ask some one else.' "

"I've noticed," said Billy, without a pause in his eloquence, "that the prominent men who write magazine and newspaper articles on "How to Succeed," always tell their yearning readers to save part of each dollar they receive, but never tell them how to get the dollar. Fact is, if they knew where the dollar was they'd go get it themselves. And they never tell how they themselves succeeded. That would be betraying a business secret. 'Work, work hard,' they say, 'do more than you're paid for doing, and you will soon be appreciated by your

employer. Do two dollars' worth of work for one dollar and you'll soon be getting three dollars.' "

Here Billy leaned over the table and spoke more impressively than I thought he was able to. "Search the career of one of these self-advisory boards for the community," he said, "and you'll find that these men succeeded by hiring men to do two dollars' worth of work for one dollar and then getting themselves incorporated and selling the work for \$5."

When Billy got through, Ma smiled across to me and said, "How much Mr. Poindexter talks like your father!"

Your hopeful son,  
P.

P. S.—We are going to a masquerade ball to-night at the De Porques. Old De P. offers a prize of \$100 for the most hideous make-up. I'm going as Milligan.



LETTER NO. VIII.





## LETTER No. VIII.

*His governor's visit to Hot Springs, a contre-temps with a British Lord, together with experiences with a few physicians, inspire Pierrepont's pen.*

CHICAGO, JAN. 23, 189—

*Dear Pa:*

There's no doubt that the Hot Springs are great for a good many ailments, and I'm glad you are improving. Professor Plexus, our old instructor in calisthenics at Harvard, used to take the trip to Arkansas with John L. Sullivan, twice a year, and they both said the treatment was fine. I don't think Sullivan had rheumatism, but your case may not be the same as his, and the scalding process will probably do you more good than it does a regular Graham hog. The boys around the office laugh considerably when they mention you and the Hot Springs, which makes me rather warm under the collar, for I can't stand having a father of mine misapprehended. I know you for what you are, but they

know you for what they think you are, and provisional knowledge, you know, goes a long ways in the provision business.

Speaking of the Hot Springs reminds me of a story Professor Plexus used to tell about the Arkansas boiling vats. According to him, there used to be a morgue connected with the establishment, for the use of those who were unlucky enough to succumb to the treatment. An old Irishman was the general factotum of the place, and it happened that he was afflicted with a bronchial disturbance that was the envy of every cougher who visited the spot. Meeting him one day in the abode of the departed, one of the doctors remarked to him, on hearing a particularly sepulchral wheeze:

“Pat, I wouldn’t have your cough for five hundred dollars.”

“Is thot so, sorr?” retorted the son of Erin. “Well,” pointing with his thumb to the inner room where the departed patients lay on slabs covered with sheets, “they’s a felly in there who wud give five t’ousand uf *he* cud hav ut.”

I simply mention this little incident in passing to show that all of us prefer the ills

we have to those we know not of. I would rather be a mailing clerk at eight per than a free man working freight trains for transportation and relying on hand-outs for sustenance in place of Ma's frugal, but certain *tâble d'hôte*.

I sincerely trust, sir, that your trip to the Springs will do you the anticipated good. Billy Poindexter says — (by the way, I guess you didn't know he was back from the Klondike. Not exactly that, either, for he didn't reach the Klondike. The nearest he got to it was on the map he bought while he was here. He went no farther than San Francisco. His only object in starting for the Yukon, he says, was to see if he couldn't pick up a good thing or two, and as he found them in 'Frisco he stayed there.) He was much concerned about you when I told him you had gone to the Springs.

"Too bad for your governor," he said. "He must suffer terribly with them."

"With them?" I asked. "With what?"

"Why, boils, of course. What would he go to the Hot Springs for, if not for boils?"

It cost me five minutes' time in a very busy evening to find out that he had made

a very bad joke, a paranomasia as we called it in college; in other words, a pun or play upon words. I've advised Billy to publish a chart of this joke. If he does I'll send you one. He says I'm as dense as that English lord who visited the works while you were away last fall.

Apropos, we met him — the lord — the other night. We were having a bite to eat at a rathskeller after the theatre when "his ludship" wandered in. He was built up regardless, with an Inverness coat with grey plaids, that looked like a country-bred rag carpet. It was the real thing, of course, and I made up my mind to save the four dollars that have been added to my stipend until I could get one like it. I decided, however, that I shall not make my possession of it public until he has left the country. I should really hate to be mistaken for him. I even prefer to be known as connected with your business.

Strange to say, when "his ludship" reached our table, he halted uncertainly as he saw me, and then stepped forward.

"You'll — aw — pawdon me, doncher-know, but — aw — is not this — aw — young Mr. — aw — Graham?"

I pleaded guilty, with a mental plea for mercy, and the next thing I knew his dukelets had made his monocle a part of the set-up of our table. I was very much embarrassed, for I didn't know how to introduce him to Billy. But his earlship quickly backed me out of that corner by calling Billy by name.

"Yaas, old chap," he was saying, "I met you—aw—at the Ring Club, doncher-know."

Billy didn't know, because his sight is often very bad, especially at the Ring Club. So the Marquis gave his memory a push.

"I'm Fitz-Herbert," he said.

This gave us the route, for his picture has several times filled up space between breakfast food ads. in the newspapers. Not that he ever seems to do anything; he's always being done for, as the guest of this, that and the other. He was desperately civil, wouldn't have us "Lord Percying" him, he said. So it was plain Percy after that and "plain Percy" he surely is. A homelier man I've never seen outside the comic weeklies. It would be great if you could hire him, dad, to scare the steers into the killing pens. He likes

American ways, he told us, between orders to the waiter. The way he did keep Garcon bringing things was a caution, and he ate and drank them, too. But he is bright and sees a point oftener than most Britishers. Some things he said made it seem almost impossible that he could be other than a Yankee.

Billy was very hard to keep in order. About midnight he usually feels patriotic and he said some things that would have riled his lordship if I hadn't tipped him the wink not to mind. Billy waved the "Star Spangled Banner" at every opportunity and if the British Isles could have heard and believed him they'd have sunk in sheer chagrin. He bragged so loudly of Uncle Sam and "the greatest nation on earth," that the night clerk woke up and came down to see how many police reserves were needed to quell the riot.

Lord Percy stood it like a weathered sport, but finally, when Billy was too busy for a minute to talk, he smiled over to me and said, "America's a great country, Mr. Poindexter, but — aw — you must admit, doncherknow, that London is ahead of New York — aw — in one thing."

Billy was right on his feet to deny everything.

"Ahead of New York!" he cried, with a scornful laugh, "In what, pray?"

"Why, mydeah boy, you must know that it's nine o'clock in London when it's only four in New York."

This seemed to daze Billy, and while he was recovering Lord Percy excused himself to speak to some friends at the other end of the café. He hadn't come back when the place closed and his pile of checks was credited to Poindexter's account by the obsequious head waiter. I've since seen by the newspapers that Lord Percy's engagement to Millicent Wheatleigh is announced. As she's got more money than any girl should be allowed to spend all alone, I presume Lord Percy will be less thoughtless about café checks after the wedding march.

As you already know, I'm no longer a stamp-licker at the old figure, but a billing clerk at twelve per. I take it that they wanted to get rid of me in my earlier situation, and passed me along toward the ownership of the house with a right good will. Whatever the motive, I appreciate



the fact, for the extra four bones will enable me to get my boots blacked occasionally, and justify my acquiring better cigars than the kind that used to drive my friends away. As you say, if I am good enough to warrant my boss pushing me upward I ought to satisfy you that I am a rising young man in the splendid enterprise of murdering hogs. I am really learning a good deal of the business, for I can now tell a ham-fat from a legitimate actor, and heaven knows we have few enough of the latter in Chicago. Billy Poindexter says that in the east they speak of "trying it on the hog," when they produce a new play in this town, and that if the animal squeals and shows signs of displeasure, they know the thing will be a great success in New York.

But to return to business. I am glad you are so worked up about my rapid rise in Graham & Co. To be sure, an ordinary bill poster around town can earn more than twelve dollars a week, but his future is generally limited to three-sheet bills and a pail of slush, while I am ticketed to a considerable share in the assets of Graham & Co. Of course, we all know that this start-



*The Son's College Girl.*



ing away down and rising by merit is considerable of a bluff, for I am your heir-at-law, and could very likely break your will if you should become cantankerous in your final testament. Of course you understand that I am not threatening you at all, but there are certain physiological facts in my position which cannot very well be overlooked. You didn't consult me when I became Pierrepont Graham, nor did I ask you to go into the pork-packing business. Since each enterprise was a success in a way, we ought to make mutual concessions.

I think I ought to tell you that Ma is getting uneasy about you. She even goes so far as to say that she takes no stock in the Hot Springs business, but thinks you are in St. Louis, having a deuce of a time. I can't see why she should be so suspicious. When I showed her the postmark on your letter, she sniffed and said it was easy enough to get some one to mail it from the Arkansas boiling-out place. She threatens to start for St. Louis in a day or two if you don't show up, which might be a pretty good thing, for I could telegraph you as soon as she left, and you could be at home

when she returned, and give her the grand laugh. It's a wise wife who doesn't know her own husband, after all.

I am getting into the social swim with both hands and feet, spite of our business. Made a great hit at the De Porque's the other night. The girls are getting up a new dancing association and wanted me to name it — because I was a Harvard man. I told them to call it the St. Vitus Club, and you ought to have seen their faces.

I regret to learn that you are in the hands of a specialist. I had one of that brand of doctors when I had the grippe at Cambridge. I grew worse suddenly one night, and as my chum couldn't reach the regular physician by 'phone he called in another. He had not been in the room three minutes when doctor No. 1 drew alongside. They were painfully cordial and had what they called a consultation. My chum said it was a fight. At all events they decided that a specialist be called. I was feeling better by that time and began to take notice. From what I saw then and have since learned from others similarly afflicted I gather that a specialist always wears gloves and a beard and speaks

with great deliberation and gravity. After feeling my pulse with excessive care, he turned to each of the medical men in turn and inquired what they had done and recommended. To each statement he muttered, "Very good," or "That is well," although the two regulars had failed to agree on any point. The other two doctors went away, with lingering glances, as if they hated to give me up. Then the specialist came out strong. "This young man," he said slowly and impressively, "has the grippe. You will continue his medicines regularly to-night — mark me, regularly. I will prescribe for him in the morning — in the morning." Then he walked out. When he called in the morning I had done the same thing — walked out. I felt a moral certainty that if he got after me I should eventually have to be carried out. The bunco business is not confined to gentlemen with beetle brows, big moustaches and checked trousers.

But doctors have their troubles — the conscientious ones. Doc Mildmay — my chum Frank's brother, you know — once had an experience with a chronic invalid — one of the kind that change their doctor

and their disease every two weeks — that was an eye-opener. A nervous, choleric old man sent for him. He was chock full of symptoms and his conversation sounded like a patent medicine folder. He wound up thusly: "When I go upstairs or up a hill I find difficulty in breathing and often get a stitch in the side. These conditions, doctor, denote a threatening affection of the heart."

Mildmay, finding the old fellow fat and thick-necked, decided he was a too liberal feeder, so, with a desire to set his fears at rest, he said: "I trust not. These are by no means necessary symptoms of heart trouble." Here the old man switched in, glaring at Mildmay. "I am sorry, sir," he said fiercely, "to note such lack of discretion. How can you presume to differ with me as to the significance of my symptoms? You, a young physician, and I an old and — well, I may say, a seasoned, experienced invalid."

Doc needed a fee badly enough, but just then needed the air more and got out.

Ma might send her love if I asked her, but I guess you'd better trim ship for the home anchorage.

Dutifully, PIERREPONT.

P. S. I've just learned that Lord Percy Fitz-Herbert's engagement to Millicent Wheatleigh has been broken off. It seems she refused to marry him because of his family. It was a wife and three children in Maine, which is the nearest he's known to have ever been to London.





**LETTER NO. IX.**



## LETTER No. IX.

*Pierrepoint gives his Pa a line on the up-to-date methods of courtship, relates an episode of calf-love and has a sling at matrimonial adages.*

CHICAGO, Feb. 10, 189—

*Dear Father :*

I realize that you mean well by me and I accept your advice on courtship, love and marriage, and all that rot, in the spirit in which it is given. But really, my dear pater, you are hopelessly in arrears in your information on those subjects. Of course you know a lot about marriage. I cannot dispute that; it is too obvious; but in matters of courtship detail you are back in the stagecoach age, hopelessly old style.

Nowadays, if a fellow is "spoons" on a girl he makes it public in quite different fashion than when you "sparked Ma"—as you rather vulgarly, as it seems to me, express it. Methods have changed since your salad days, when courtship consisted of escorting the same girl home from sing-

ing school three weeks running and then going in the cherished "best suit" to "keep company" with her one or two evenings a week. The modern swain has an entirely different system, although I grant you that he makes an ass of himself quite as much as his predecessors. There is no more sitting in the back parlor with the gas low. All reputable back parlors are electrically illuminated and the situation is therefore changed. I do not say, however, that lamps are not sometimes provided by thoughtful parents of large families of daughters of marriageable age. The average young man, however, would regard the presence of a lamp in such circumstances as a danger signal, and run on to the first siding. No eligible young man likes to feel that he is walking into a specially set matrimonial trap.

As you may judge from the florist's bill brought to your attention, Cupid, nowadays, is very partial to flowers. In your day a straw ride once or twice a winter, a few glasses of lemonade or plates of ice-cream, and church sociables and picnics were about the only obligations attendant upon making a girl think herself your par-

ticular one. To-day hot-house roses and violets, boxes of chocolate, appreciated only when expensively trade-marked, matinee tickets, auto rides, dainty luncheons with chaperons on the side — but I could fill two pages in enumeration of the little, but expensive attentions which the up-to-date city girl demands. And all these things may mean much or little. Because a fellow runs up a florist's bill is no sign that his next purchase will be an engagement ring. Lots of fellows with lots of money buy lots of things for lots of nice girls and no questions asked. You certainly don't want your only son and heir to be a rank outsider.

As a matter of fact, the joke is on you in regard to that bill of \$52 for roses sent to Mabel Dashkam and charged up to me. To be sure, I don't quite see how the thing reached you at the Springs. Pollen & Stalk ought to be called down good and plenty for chasing you around the country with a thing they should have known you took no interest in. It reflects on me, and I'll see that such a gross insult isn't repeated. But about the joke. I didn't send the roses to Mabel Dashkam at all. Since dallying

with hogs I seem to have acquired an improved taste in girls, and her face doesn't warm me in the least. The fact is that little Bud Hoover, who is just at present in town, living a life of mysterious ease, has conceived the idea that he could stand being Job Dashkam's son-in-law. He thinks there is a gold mine in the old man's backyard, evidently; he isn't at all afraid that Job will ever borrow money of him — and he's right there.

Well, it came around to Mabel's birthday, and Bud, who'd been doing the grand social at the house for some time, saw that it was up to him to celebrate the occasion with a "trifling nosegay," as he put it. He nailed me for the wherewithal, urging that I was in duty bound to help a struggling young man to a position. When I couldn't quite focus my approval on that proposition, he declared that I owed the service to him because his grandfather had saved my father's soul. That was a clincher, and I let him get the roses and charge 'em to me. As you say, most young fellows who explode fifty-two for flowers at one blast will wish they had the money for provisions some time or other. Not so with Bud,

however; he never can be poorer than he is now, and he calculates to eat on Job for the rest of his natural life. There's a good deal of his grandfather in Bud.

You needn't worry about my acquaintance with Mabel. She's bully good sort and always ready for a good time in good company. But just because a fellow is civil to her doesn't jump her to the conclusion that he sits up nights trying to fit her name into metre. That's what I like about her. A fellow can invite her to go golfing without any danger of her knocking the ball into the first grove she sights that looks suitable for a proposal. The girls are not as dead crazy to marry as they were when you were young; I have proof positive of this. Even mother admits that it is true.

Your matrimonial adages and observations please me quite considerably, dear father. It's a long time since you had your little fling with Cupid, and the world has moved a bit since then, but at the same time you strike twelve pretty often. You warn me against marrying a poor girl who's been raised like a rich one; I can think of but one thing worse, and that's



marrying a rich girl who's been raised like a poor one. And what you say about picking out a good-looking wife is eminently sane, if not always practicable. I'm bound to observe, however, that if you'd put your theory into practice when you married, I'd probably be a good bit handsomer than I am. As for Mabel, she wouldn't marry me if I could move the whole Graham plant into her father's backyard on the wedding morning. Her father's curbstone brokerage in wheat may not be as high-class or as remunerative as trying out hog fat, but it's certainly less malodorous.

Besides, Mabel has aspirations. Although I am not in her confidence, she is known as committed to the theory that love in a cottage — or its municipal equivalent, a flat — is an obsolete form of existence. The legitimate inference is that the eligible men who are several times millionaires in their own right had better wear smoked glasses when they get up against Mabel. Marriage, to date, does not appeal to me strongly. I hope to trot quite a number of speedy miles alone before I have to slow down under a double hitch. Naturally, considering the fact that I am

your son and in view of your business, I have not escaped a few attacks of "calf love." I suppose it is as inevitable as the measles.

The worse case I ever had was when, in my first year at Cambridge, I made desperate love to the accompanist who banged the piano for the Glee Club rehearsals. She was a widow with a small child who always accompanied her, and her desolateness appeared to touch a hidden, sympathetic chord in my nature. Whatever the cause, I was dippy for fair. I fairly bombarded her with music, and the kid must have thought me an edition *de luxe* of Santa Claus. It's only fair to say that she seemed to try to avoid me, but I was not to be turned aside. I insisted on seeing her to her door after rehearsals, and then stood under her window for hours, like a cross between a hitching post and a jack-ass. She was courteous, almost maternal, in her attitude towards me. The boys said she was thirty-five, but I scorned them. What was age to love, which is eternity.

Sometimes she smiled at me and I bounded up into the seventh heaven, although I often wondered if she was

only too well-bred not to laugh outright. (Her father and husband had both been connected with Harvard.) She was pretty; I have no doubt of that, even now; but her hair was flaming red. I called it Titian then, but love is color-blind with all the rest. The "fatal day" came in about six weeks. I proposed in the front hall of her boarding-house and she took me into the parlor and closed the door. That would have been the overture to a breach-of-promise suit or a Dakota divorce purchased by my loving papa, if she had been some woman, but she wasn't. She thanked me for the honor—I have since realized that she was not afraid of a white lie—and then she began to try to argue me out of it. She referred to the disparity in our ages, to her widowhood and my youth, to the difference in our stations, etc. Of course I pooh-poohed it all and vowed everlasting devotion. I dimly recollect that I made some mention of the Charles River. After I had delivered a passionate oration that would have given a long-time discount to Demosthenes and Romeo rolled into one, she looked at me searchingly a moment and then rose and said:

"Very well, I will marry you — on one condition."

What were conditions to me? I — you know, just the usual. I wanted to name the day then and there, and the next day at that, but she insisted upon the condition.

"I will go to my room," she said, "and put the condition in writing, that there may never be any doubt in the future."

When she returned she placed in my hand a sealed envelope and exacted a pledge that I would not open it until I reached my room.

"If, when you know the condition," she said at parting, "you are still determined on marriage, you will find me in till noon to-morrow."

I ran all the way to the dormitory, and when I reached my rooms I was so nervous that it took me five minutes to unlock the door and five more to light a match. Then I sat down at my study table,—for the first time in some weeks—tore open the envelope, spread out the single sheet of paper it contained, and read:

"The condition upon which I will entertain an offer of marriage from you is this:

I am, unfortunately, unduly sensitive about the color of my hair. Will you dye yours the same red to keep me in countenance?"

I scarcely imagine she waited till noon the next day,—that is, if she had anything to do. She probably explained to the kid that Santa Claus had died suddenly. I didn't recover my self-respect nor my common sense for a week. When I did I sent her a box of flowers and enclosed a note in which I said that ever afterwards I should regard red hair as the accompaniment of strong common sense.

As for now, there is scarcely any danger, as you suggest, of a girl marrying me for your money—that is, if she has seen you. You look as if you were a goodly representative of a line of ancestors dating back to the original Methusalah. Natural demise is evidently afar off, and really there is nothing about you to suggest that you are likely to blow out the gas in the next hotel you stop at.

As for love, I've none of the symptoms. There isn't a girl in Chicago who can boast that I've let her beat me at golf. Almost all girls are all right to meet occasionally, but when you're picking one to sit

opposite you at breakfast every morning you want to be sure you will get one who will not take away your appetite. It's safer, I believe, to select a wife for what she is not rather than for what she is. Al Packard — you know him — with his father on the Board of Trade — married his wife, Sophie Trent, because she was a brilliant conversationalist. Now he has applied for a divorce for the same reason. A man and his wife should be one, of course, but the question often is, which one? It is rather trying to the male disposition to have the wife the one and the husband the cipher on the other side of the plus sign.

That you may feel more confidence in me, I will make a confession. I *was* a bit smitten last fall. I won't tell the girl's name. She had really done nothing to encourage me. I called one afternoon and her little sister received me and said, "Sister's out."

"Tell her I called, Susie, will you?"

"I did," she smiled back.

That ended my pool-selling on that race.

You don't say anything about your condition at the Vattery, nor when you are coming home. You needn't hurry, neces-

sarily, for Ma's disquiet about your whereabouts has quite disappeared. It seems that old Wheatleigh, who bobbed up at the house the other night, must have divined her suspicions, for he remarked casually that he'd just seen you at the Hot Springs and that you were looking out of sight. The odd part of it was that he hadn't been anywhere near Arkansas. It's curious how a woman will believe all men but her own husband.

I think I must be making a hit at this billing business, for I hear a rumor about the place that I'm to be sent out collecting. I sincerely hope you'll use what influence you've got to prevent this, for I can't even collect my thoughts in this porkery, much less gather in accounts due it outside. I'm afraid I've got too much conscience to face debtors to Graham & Co.

Your heartwhole son,  
P.

P. S.—Talking about women suggests that I tell you that old Mrs. De Lancey Cartwright is evidently heartbroken over her husband's loss, although he's been dead six months. Her mourning is so deep that her hair has turned black again.

LETTER NO. X.





## LETTER No. X.

*First experiences "on the road" inspire little confidence on the part of Pierrepont either in himself, the Graham goods, or country hotels.*

FOSTERVILLE, IND., March 4, 189—

*My Dear Father:*

Although I have not succeeded to date in getting far enough from Chicago to escape the odors of your refinery and have yet to ascertain how a man looks when he gives an order, I feel that I am going to like being a drummer. There is a certain independence about it which pleases me. While I, of course, shall labor early and late in the interests of the house, there is a great deal in not having a time-keeper staring you in the face every morning. The call left at the hotel office is sufficient reminder to me of the flight of time, especially after I have sat up till 4 A.M. trying to make things come my way. I may not, as you hint, be cut out by the Lord for a drummer. In fact, I don't believe I was, for

from what I have seen of the species I am of the belief that the Lord does not number its manufacture among His responsibilities. At all events it is sufficient for me to know that you, the head of the house, have selected me as one.

Let me reassure you on one point. I may have looked chesty and important when I started from Chicago the other morning, but my experience as a drummer for Graham & Co. has so completely knocked the self-esteem out of me that I don't believe my hat will ever cock on one side again. It's all right enough to sit in the office and talk about the big business you have built, but just get out into the world and stack up against the fact that you've got to sell our stuff to suspicious buyers or lose your job, and you'll find yourself a first-class understudy for Moses in short order.

The first two days out I felt so proud of the house that I added "Graham & Co." to my name on the hotel register. But I dropped that little flourish just as soon as I saw that it got me the worst room on the key-rack and the toughest steak in the dining-room. What on earth have we been

doing to people for the last thirty years that makes them all down on us? I see that I'm going to have no trouble in making the concern known; in fact, if I may venture to say so, it seems to be too well known.

For some reasons I regret leaving the house. Business may go on well enough in my absence, but it's a mighty poor fiddler who thinks the orchestra plays as loud as it did before he breaks a string. I thank you for your hints as to methods in soliciting trade, but I also appreciate the truth that, after all, the man on the spot must give the decision. So far, I see no reason for your belief that a fund of anecdote is not necessary to the commercial traveller. (I may say in passing that I much prefer this phrase to drummer, although I am prepared to admit that after I sell a bill of goods I may be ready to accept any title.) Jokes may not be profitable as the main stock in trade, but they are certainly essential as a side line.

So far, I have been utterly unable to get up early enough in the morning to reach a customer before he has fallen into the clutches of one or more of my competitors, and when I arrive they are usually so hila-

rious over funny stories that business — especially serious business, like the buying of our products — is the thing farthest from their thoughts. Because a man who wanted to sell you a dog once indulged in flippant, but you must admit, clever repartee about your needing such things in your business, you must not draw the inference that the sense of humor has entirely departed from storekeepers.

Of course the joke must not be on the prospective customer, as was that of the dog fancier in your case. I found that out to my sorrow the other day. I had almost persuaded a country grocer to try a couple of pails of lard and a ham — not munificent, but a beginning — when I tipped the fat into the fire by being over keen to take a joke. A small boy came running in with a wad of paper, apparently containing money, clutched in one fist and a card in the other hand.

“How much is ten pounds of sugar at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  cents a pound?” he asked.

“Fifty-five cents,” said the grocer.

“And a quarter of a pound of 60-cent tea?”

“Fifteen cents — to your mother” — smiled the grocer.

"And a half peck of potatoes at 28 cents a peck?" asked the boy.

"Fourteen," said the grocer.

"And four cans of tomatoes at  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents each," said the boy, consulting his list.

"Just fifty cents," said the grocer.

"And six pounds of rice at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents?"

"Twenty-one cents. Is that all?" asked the grocer, as the boy put his card in his pocket.

"Yes," said the boy; "what does it all cost?"

The grocer figured with a bit of charcoal on a bag and said: "A dollar fifty-five. Will you take the package?"

"Nope," said the boy, edging towards the door. "I'm on my way to school."

"Very well, I'll send it right up," said the grocer, urbanely.

"Wouldn't if I were you," said the boy. "Ma aint at home. She don't want the stuff, anyhow. That was only my 'rithmetic lesson."

As the lad vanished I laughed and said "bon voyage" to my prospective order. The worst of it is, the boys say that this story dates back to Joe Miller's great-grandfather. But it taught me that it is some-

times wise to be deaf, dumb and blind to the point of a joke.

Unfortunately, I am short on the joke market, and to date have been unable to meet the keen competition I encounter in this line. Job Withers, a big-faced, big-voiced chap, who travels for Soper & Co., spins yarns with the speed, ease and penetrating quality of a well greased circular saw. When he goes into a store he looks about, comments on any changes or improvements that may have occurred since his last visit, asks the proprietor about his dog, if he has one, and about his wife, if he has not, sits on a barrel and says: "Did I ever tell you —?" At that there is a great shuffling of feet and all the store loungers sit up and take notice. Then he launches into a story and follows it with another and another. Then, when the boss is wiping away the tears that come with the laughter, Job pulls out an order blank and, with a look about the store, says: "I see you're almost all out of —" and he writes off a list of things. Before the echoes of the laughter have ceased the order is rolling along towards "the House" in the custody of a two-cent stamp.

If there is one thing needed more than nerve in this business it is hypnotism ; and in the practical part of this science Job Withers has Mesmer and Professor Carpenter backed clear over the divide. It's no trick to sell a man anything he wants, but unfortunately no one ever wants anything. The Job Witherses see to that by their delicate attentions in keeping everybody stocked up. A man'll never get the V. H. C. from "the House" till he learns how to sell goods that his customer doesn't want, and I tell you, pater, a good swift game of talk—the right kind—is what gives the shelves and refrigerators of country stores indigestion. If you pursued a different policy I do not wonder that when you tried travelling you had, as you hint, to run the last quarter in record time in order to anticipate a request for your resignation.

But I have a suspicion that you have not dealt squarely by me. I will be frank and tell you why. In view of the paucity of my supply of stories—and nothing, I assure you, but extremity would have induced me to do it—I overhauled your letters the other day and weeded out the best of your



anecdotes and tried them on some of my intended customers. It immediately became clear to me why you do not believe in story-telling as an adjunct to trade. You must have been less philosophical during your brief stay on the road than you are now, otherwise you would have realized that the failure of your crop of anecdotes to yield a harvest does not prove the futility of planting a different class of seed. The well-known facts concerning *our* hams do not demonstrate that there are no good hams in the market.

One thing is sure. I shall send "the House" an order before the week is out, even if I have to eat the stuff myself. It really can't be worse than the food I get at some of the hotels. The hotel in the town before this was a wonder. I asked for a napkin and the table girl said they used to have them, but the boarders took so many with them that it was too expensive. I guess they ate them in preference to the food. I told the girl I'd have a piece of steak and an egg. She returned, cheerful but empty-handed.

"I am sorry, sir," she lisped, "but cook says the last piece of steak has been used

for a hinge on the landlord's daughter's trunk. She is to be married to-day," she added, with a smile evidently intended to be engaging. But I didn't care to be engaged, at least not to her.

"Well, bring an egg and some toast," I said, amiably.

"Sorry, sir," chirped up Bright Eyes, "but cook's just beaten up the egg. She says you can have your share of it in the meringue pudding at dinner."

"What *have* you got, then?" I demanded with some acrimony.

"Hot lamb, cold lamb, roast lamb, and minced lamb," she gurgled. I subsequently ascertained that they sheared the lamb a few days before and that the poor innocent caught cold and died.

If they were as strict in their menu in these country hotels as they are in their rules, it would be all right. No hotel is complete without a long list of "Don'ts for Guests," plastered on the inside of the door. Here are a few that appealed to me with especial force:

"Please do not tip the waiters or the porter." (As the waiters did nothing for me and the porter weighed 285 pounds I conformed to this rule.)

"In event'of fire an alarm will be sounded on the gongs if the night clerk is awake. The fire-escapes are in the office safe. In case of fire you can have one after you have paid your bill."

It is hard to get a decent night's rest in these hostelryes. If it isn't one thing it's another. Last Saturday I was so tired that I felt I wouldn't care if I jumped Sunday right out of the calendar. Sunday morning I was sleeping beautifully when there was a rap on the door.

"Been't you a goin' to git up?" came a squeaky voice.

"What time is it?" I asked.

"Half past seven," was the reply.

"Get up? No, go away," I shouted.

"Breakfast comes in half an hour," said the squeak.

"Don't want any breakfast," I thundered back.

"All right, the other boarders do."

"What in blazes is that to me?" I snarled.

"We want your sheets for tablecloths."

Do not worry. I shall not write long letters to "the House." They will be as short as my expense account will permit.

Your hungry but hopeful son, P.

P.S. On the dead, now, did my recital of my hotel experiences make you laugh? They are not quite genuine. How do you think they would go as a part of my sample line of stories for the trade?



LETTER NO. XI.



## LETTER No. XI.

*Pierrepont meets with some curious experience  
“on the road;” attends a “badger fight,”  
and relates some of his adventures  
in country hotels.*

HARROD'S CREEK, IND., April 16, 189—

*Dear Dad:*

There's no use in telling me that I've got to dream hog if I want to get a raise—for that's what all this rumpus on the road amounts to, after all. There's no need, I say, to enforce the lesson, for I have porcine nightmares every time I go to bed out in this uncivilized country. And I *do* wake up with determination—the determination to do something to get back to dear old Chicago, if I have to do the Weary Waggles act over the pike. When I think that I used to disparage our city in comparison with Boston, I feel very humble indeed. In comparison with the villages I've struck since I've been the *avant courier* of Graham & Co., Chicago is a paradise which no sensible man ought to



depreciate. Milligan used to tell about a purgatory to which wandering souls have to go for a bit of scrubbing up to fit them for the good things of heaven. Of course he referred to experience on the road.

You complain because my selling cost in this sort of life just balances the profit I turn in to the house, but I think it should be a source of great satisfaction that you've got a son who can so rise superior to circumstances as to pay his way with the Graham incubus hitched to his shoulders. It's worth something to make an Ananias of yourself a dozen times a day, with bad dreams thrown in at the end of it. A liar is popular only when his cause hits the popular taste, and I've yet to find a town where our bluff is worth more than twenty-five cents in the pot.

Of course life isn't all a vale of tears, even during the quest for orders. There was a rift of sunlight yesterday at Simkinsville Four Corners, where I assisted at the annual Spring dog-and-badger fight. This function is gotten up with such a regard for the proprieties that even a college man has to give it his approval. I happened to arrive in town on the day of the festivity,

and just naturally wanted to see it. A big crowd gathered in an open space back of the town hall, and all other interests were neglected for the time being. Even the Presbyterian minister was on hand to see that the thing was carried out in a fair and square manner, and I felt that with such spiritual backing the fight ought to be a good go.

There was a good-sized box in the centre of the ring, under which some one told me was a badger of exceptional fierceness. About ten feet away was a bull terrier who looked like the veteran of a hundred fields. He was kept in leash by a muscular negro, and the way he strained at his chain convinced me that badger was his particular meat and that he ate a good many pounds a day.

At the time I arrived on the scene there seemed to be a difference of opinion as to who should pull the string of the box and liberate the badger. Finally the row grew so intense that an election was proposed, and nominations for the exalted office were made. But every one who was mentioned seemed to have some out about him. He had bet heavily on either the dog or the

badger, and such a thing as pulling the string with impartiality was thought to be out of the question. Meantime the odds were being chalked up on a big blackboard amid the excited roars of the crowd, and it began to look as if there wouldn't be any dog-and-badger fight at all.

Just at this point somebody suggested me as the proper string-puller, on the ground that I was a stranger and not biased either way. "Besides," he urged, "as a college athlete he is an expert on sport." Then the whole crowd yelled "Graham, Graham," and I felt that I ought to respond to the confidence imposed in me. So I made a little speech in which I said I was highly honored by the nomination and would accept the duty with the firm determination to do unswerving justice to all.

I took the string as the bulldog was making frantic endeavors to get at the box, and turned my head away so as to give a pull that should be absolutely fair. Then the umpire began to count, amid the breathless silence of the crowd. At the word "three" I gave a tremendous yank at the box, and — well, the result wasn't exactly conducive to the dignity of yours

truly, for there, where I had uncovered what was supposed to be a fierce badger, stood a full-fledged cuspidor.

I don't know which looked the sickest, the dog or I, but he had the advantage of being able to sneak off into the crowd, while I had to stand and take the wild cheers of the populace like a true hero of the Graham stock. It cost me considerable to wipe out the disgrace in drink for the gathering, but it simply had to be done if I am to sell any goods in this vicinity. And as what I am out for is orders with a capital O, it follows that I've got to have the capital necessary to get 'em. You understand, of course, and will approve my next expense account with a glad hand.

In this town I am staying at the Eagle Hotel,—a hostelry that would probably carry you back to your boyhood days. It's the kind where one roller-towel does duty for every one in the washroom, and a big square trough filled with sawdust is the general office cuspidor. There's no table in my room, of course, so I'm writing this on the slanting pine board they call the writing desk, listening to the shouts of the natives and the stories of mine host, Major Jaggins.

The major is a slab-sided, lantern-jawed individual, who got his title all right in the war, as his two cork legs prove. He's a very tall man, and when I ventured to remark on his unusual height the crowd roared and voted that I was elected to "buy." All strangers buy on this particular proposition, I was told.

It seems that Major Jaggins was a regular sawed-off before the war, and he felt his lack of height keenly, especially as he had a soaring mind and had to answer to the name of "Stumpy." But his time came. At the battle of Cold Harbor he had both legs taken off by a shell. When he came to he gave a yell of delight that paralyzed the nurses and nearly scared the rest of the hospital to death. He was simply thinking of what he was going to do on the leg matter, and he realized that he wasn't going to be "Stumpy" Jaggins any more. After he was cured he just gave his order to the cork leg people to make him two of the longest pins he could stand up on. Consequently he now walks the earth a trifle shakily, to be sure, but way above the general run of mankind, and that's what he likes. He swore he'd been short long enough.

I simply mention the case of Major Jaggins as a reminder that nature doesn't know everything, and that art sometimes has the last word. Even if I'm not cut out by an obliging providence to be the proprietor of a big packing house — and your letters sometimes have a pessimistic ring that implies your belief that I am not — a good deal can be done by kindness and a judicious expenditure of money. Which leads me quite naturally to remark that your ideas of a travelling man's expenses are evidently founded on your early knowledge of pack-peddling. Then again, these country yokels have to be conciliated, and, although whiskey is cheap, they have blamed long throats.

This hotel belies its name, for they say eagles don't feed on carrion. But it's no use kicking at the table, for Major Jaggins simply stivers out to the pantry and brings back a lot of Graham cans which he places at your plate with an injured air. I suppose he has the same gag for the drummers of all the different houses, but it's effective, just the same.

Apropos of hotels, I have discovered a curious fact: the farther you go the worse

they get, and even if you strike a good one occasionally it only increases your sorrow, for comparison augments the future misery. It's no use to try to pick your hotel. No matter which one you select in a town, you'll be sorry you didn't go to the other. And if you make a change and go to the other you're dead certain to regret that you didn't know when you were well off and stay where you were.

It's no use to complain. I've tried it. Night before last I slept in a room that was apparently a gymnasium for rats. About two o'clock, when they began to use the pit of my stomach for a spring-board, I went down to the office and pried the clerk out from behind the cigar counter.

"See here," I said, "I can't sleep, there's so much noise."

"Sorry, sir, but I can't help it," he replied, flicking a dust atom from the register. "This is a hotel. The Sanitorium is on the next street. Ever try powders?"

"What on?" I queried, not to be outdone, "the rats?"

"Rats? I do hope ye haven't got them. The last man that —"

"No, I haven't got 'em, but the room has. They're all over the place."

"Rats, eh?" and the clerk gave the register a twirl. "Let's see, you're in 51—dollar room. Couldn't expect buffaloes at that price, could ye?"

I stayed in the office the rest of the night and in the morning the clerk pointed me out to his chief.

"That gent," he said, "has insomniay."

"That won't do, young man," said the landlord, with a withering look. "We can't have such things in this house. It's a family hotel."

I tried making inquiries, but it's no good. Every man in town will swear that some particular hotel is "the best this side the Mississippi." Foolishly enough, I tried to quiz the clerk of one house, while I was registering. I wound up a few queries about the table with the conundrum, "Are your eggs fresh?" He knew the answer.

"Fresh?" he drawled, looking straight at me. Then he rang a bell, and cried, "Front!" The one bell-boy appeared from somewhere, eating what was once an apple.

"Gent to hund'erd an' thirteen," said the clerk. "An', boy, stop at the dining-hall on your way back and tell the head waiter



that this gentleman is to have his eggs laid on his toast by the hens direct."

That was the end of my attempts at previous investigating. Now if I cannot eat the food, I content myself with chewing the cud of bitter reflection. But I'd barter my immortal soul for a square meal at mother's round table.

The time I've put in at the different grocery stores to-day has served as a regular eye-opener to me as to the game I'm up against. Apparently nobody in this whole country except the patrons of the Eagle eat any packed provisions at all, and our special brand seems to be a dead one on all the shelves. I couldn't give the stuff away, much less sell it. I did place one order for a hundred pails of lard, but I learned to-night that the fellow is going into insolvency in a day or two, so I guess you'd better not send the stuff.

Taking it by and large, I have discovered that a thorough course in hypnotism would be the best equipment for a successful salesman of our particular kind of goods. For instance, if I could look old Sol Blifkins of the Harrod's Creek Bazaar and Emporium in the eye, and make him

believe that folks were just clamoring for frankfurts instead of rum in these parts, and compel him to see a blank space where our aged cans are still lumbering his shelves, I fancy the thing would be a cinch. One of our fellows at Harvard, the son of an Episcopal bishop, wrote me a while ago that his father had decided upon his taking orders, and that it was a blamed hard proposition; I don't know what his special line is, but if it can match this gunning for pork buyers he has my sincere sympathy.

I keep running across Job Withers. I think he's detailed by his house to watch me. He arrived at the City Hotel this morning just as I was leaving it to go on a still hunt for a ham sandwich. He greeted me cheerily.

"Ah! been stopping at the City? Good hotel. Fine table."

"Is it?" I said calmly.

"Yes, indeed; best this side of Indianapolis."

Thank heaven, I'm going the other way. I didn't tell him that. What I did say was: "You say this is a good hotel and a good table?" He nodded. "Well," I

went on, "let me tell you a story." That staggered him, for I saw he realized that if I'd reached the story stage I was due for business.

"There was once a little boy," I proceeded, "who was sitting on the walk under a green apple tree, doubled up with cramps and howling like a pocket edition fiend. A bespectacled lady of severe cast of countenance, stopped and asked him his trouble. 'Them,' said the boy, pointing to the tree, 'and I've an orful pain.'

"'Pain!' said the lady, 'don't you know there's no such thing? You only think so. Have faith and you'll have no pain.'

"'Gee!' said the boy, 'that's all right. You may think there's no pain, but,' rubbing his stomach dolefully, 'I've positive inside information.' And so have I about this hotel," I said to Withers as I left him. Confidentially, I think Withers' label reads "N. G." My one object in life is to put him off the reservation. From now on watch

Your hustling son,

PIERREPONT.



*Pierrepont Graham as a Travelling Salesman.*



P. S. Please ask the cashier to forward an immediate check for enclosed voucher — a bill presented by the landlord of the Eagle Hotel. The “medical services” were for typhoid fever, contracted by his family. It appears that your drummer who came here last fall emptied part of the contents of his sample case in a vacant lot back of the hotel.



LETTER NO. XII.





## LETTER No. XII.

*Pierrepont puts one of the paternal theories into execution with unfortunate results and recites some drummer's yarns with philosophical addenda.*

MUDDY FORK, IND., April 21, 189—

*Dear Father:*

The tone of your last letter isn't altogether pleasing to me, nor does it reflect credit on yourself. You hint that because I am patient under this life of hardship and abuse, spent in trying to convince people that what they know about Graham & Co's. stuff is all wrong — you hint, I say, that I am a mule. If that is so, your knowledge of natural history ought to show you that you are not patting yourself on the back to any great extent; you are my father, you know. You remind me of what Johnny Doolittle, who used to live next door to us, once said to his father when the old man remonstrated at his lack of table manners.

“Johnny, you are a perfect pig!” shouted old Doolittle.

"Well, pa," replied Johnny, as innocent as could be, "ain't a pig a hog's little boy?"

I mention Johnny merely to remind you that the sort of reviling I have been getting of late out here in this God-forsaken country, on duty for the house, has its recoil and you're the fellow who's getting hit. It's worse than old Elder Hoover's famous gun that Uncle Ephraim used to tell me about. According to him, there was a big rabbit hunt one day, and the Elder was persuaded to join. Some of the backsliders had rigged up a gun for his special use, loaded with a double charge of powder and shot and rammed tighter than glue. At last Doc drew a bead on a big jack and let go. When the roar had ceased and the smoke lifted, the Elder was seen on his back, pawing the air with hands and feet and shouting for help.

"Did the gun kick, Elder?" asked one of the bad hunters.

"Kick," roared the good man, "it nearly kicked me into hell, for if I hadn't been so stunned I'd have taken the name of the Lord in vain, as sure as I'm a miserable sinner."

Now if you want me to kick, dear father, I can do a job that would make a Missouri mule look like a grasshopper. I'm shod with good hard facts which you know as much about as I do. If decency doesn't suit you, I'll give you an exhibition of bag-punching that will make your head swim.

I now beg leave to report on the result of one of your pieces of advice as to ways and means in selling. A little while back, you remember, you said that I was pretty sure to run into a buyer who would bring me a pail of lard which he would say was made by a competitor, and ask what I thought of such stuff. Then, when I had condemned it by and large, you allowed he would tell me it was our own lard and the store would have the grand cachinnation on me. What I ought to say, you observed, was, that I didn't think So-and-So could produce such good stuff. That would clinch an order, sure enough -- still according to you.

Well, I ran into the identical thing at Higginbotham Bros., in this town. Just as I was nailing an order for 200 pails with Lige Higginbotham, his brother Nat blew

in with some lard that he said was made by Skinner & Co., our big rivals, and asked me what I thought of that for a bucket of slush.

I had presence of mind enough to remember what you had said, and I told him that it was a blamed sight better lard than I thought Skinner & Co. were capable of putting out. Then I waited for the laugh at Nat's expense, but there wasn't any. It was very, very quiet, a stillness relieved only by the working of Lige's jaws on his quid.

"Well," said he, after a pause that I knew was deadly, "if you, a competitor, say it's good lard, why, gosh dang it, it *must* be all right. And seein' that Skinner's always treated us white, I guess I'll telegraph that order for 200 pails instead of givin' it to you."

You see the lard *was* Skinner's, as I saw a minute afterwards by the cover on the pail. This little incident gives me serious doubts whether you can safely regard all men as liars.

There happens to be quite a jolly crowd of drummers of various persuasions at this hotel just at present, and last night we had a little *seance* in the smoking-room for

mutual inspiration and advancement. The talk naturally got rather shoppy at last, and the fellows began bragging of the business they did. A drummer for grindstones said that he thought he'd average up about six sales a day, and a fellow in whiskey allowed that he would make at least ten. Then a Hebrew, who travelled with neckties, declared that he could take in about a dozen orders, and so it went. I modestly admitted that I was handicapped, and that two sales per diem were about all I could attain to under the circumstances. Of course that's more than I do make, but, as you say, you've got to impress the world with the fact that you're some pumpkins or you won't get assessed at even cucumbers.

They'd all got through their little yarns, except one thin-faced, quiet chap who sat in a corner and didn't have much to say. Finally the Hebrew pounced on him, thinking he'd have some fun at his expense.

"You hafn't told us vat you do, mein frent," he said to the quiet fellow. "Efery-pody must speak in this exberience meeting. How many sales do you make?"

The man looked up with a sort of weary expression on his face and replied:

"Well, if I make one sale a year, I think I'm doing pretty well."

"Von sale a year!" exclaimed the descendant of Aaron, with a pitying smile. "Von sale a *year*! Vy, vot do you travel for?"

"Suspension bridges," replied the quiet man, and we all regarded our cigar ashes in silence. After a while we suspended the Hebrew from the association for not making good at the bar.

One of the crowd is a Boston fellow who is out selling encyclopedias. He has the usual Hub classicism, aided and abetted by a desire to ask conundrums. He hit everybody good and hard, and then landed on me.

"Why are you so different from Circe?" he asked.

Of course I gave it up. Does anybody ever guess conundrums they don't know?

"Because Circe turned men into hogs, while you are trying to turn hogs into men," he replied, and I started for bed then and there. Always on the hog always! When will it end?

This town is full and boiling over with drummers. I never saw so many in one

day in my life. There is more shop talk going on here to-night than occurs in a week in all the Siegel-Cooper stores. I verily believe that there are ten men here to try and sell something, for every man there is to buy. Somehow or other the town has assumed the proportions of a junction, or a drummers' fair. The townspeople, they say, are much excited over it, and the village constable is at the town hall swearing in two deputies. As Job Withers has made himself very conspicuous during the day, I think the reason for the reign of terror is evident.

Job, by the way, had a bit of the conceit taken out of him at the depot this evening. Several of us were down there to inquire about trains, etc. As no train would stop for nearly an hour, none of the station hands were about. Withers took the fact as a text and delivered a short, but exceedingly ornate, sermon to the crossing flagman on the moribund condition of the town. He fairly tore its reputation to shreds. Finally, with one finger laying down the law in the palm of his other hand, Job fired this at the defenceless old flagman:



"I tell you, sir, this town needs more life and energy. Something needs to come along and shake things up."

Just then the Inter-state Express dashed by at sixty miles an hour, and "something" came along. It was a heavy mail bag tossed from Uncle Sam's car, and it took poor Job plumb in the centre of gravity. Over he went, like an Arabian acrobat. When we picked him out of the ditch he looked like what's left after a Kansas cyclone. But he was game.

"Boys, this time the laugh's on me," he cried. "The evening's artificial irrigation will be charged to my house."

I hate to do it, but I must. When Job tries to cut me out of a trade with his stories, I'll make him the hero of one of mine. Then I guess I'll coax a little business by his fat sides.

Speaking of trains, reminds me of the laugh some of the boys had on Sol Lichinstein the other day. He was to take the 3.30 out of Michigan City, and about quarter of three his great bulk — he is very corpulent — was seen dashing down the street at furious pace. A half hour later two or three other drummers, who

had proceeded leisurely to the station, found him still out of breath. "What made you run so, Sol?" asked one of them.

"Hang it all!" he answered, "the clock in front of the jeweler's store in the hotel block was wrong. It said 3.20."

"The clock on the post, Sol?" asked one of the party.

"Yes; confound it!"

"Well, Sol, that clock's said 3.20 every time I've been here for four years. The hands are painted on."

When the story was told to a party of us, one man spoke up after the laugh and said: "Well, it's not surprising. Lichinstein is always chock full of business."

I met him to-day for the first time and found this statement is true. He *is* chock full of business—liquor business is his line.

Apropos of business, I may state that I think you must find some cause to congratulate yourself on the gains I am making. As you say, new methods *are* better than old and I am beginning to believe I have discovered a few of them. It has taken me some time, for it's hard to

teach an old dog new tricks and, although I'm not so old, still I'm somewhat removed from the young pup you once called me. Still, an old dog can learn new tricks — by himself. Old Gabe Short, of Harrod's Creek, says the only reason you cannot teach an old dog new tricks is because he has got on to the game and refuses to learn 'em, knowing that he will be called up to perform for company. Old Gabe knows, for he has heaps of opportunity for observation. He hasn't done any work for over thirty years. The story goes that he was such a coward at the outbreak of the Rebellion that he said, that rather than go to war he'd stay at home and lick stamps. And he did it, too. After all the men went to war he got the postmastership.

Gabe has a fat old water spaniel who is too lazy to do anything but eat and chase fleas. The latter task is usually performed in half-hearted fashion. One day — but I'll try to tell it as old Gabe does.

“One day an out-of-town dog was friendly with Neb and after he left there seemed to be a heap o' worry on my dog's mind. He just couldn't keep still. It was scratch here and nibble there. Fleas never seemed

to stir him up like that afore and I made up my mind that the strange cur had imported a new brand of the critters. Finally the old fellow was so bad that I gave him a dose of flea powder. Seems like it druv the varmints all into his tail, fur he chased it fur hours, as he hadn't done since he was a purp. I was busy and anyway I'd used all the powder I had. He's so fat he couldn't catch that tail and it was funny an' a bit pitiful, too, the way he went after it.

"Finally, just as he seemed driven to desperation, he stopped short. He stood and looked around at that tail. Then he slowly backed up against the counter till his tail laid alongside. Then he pushed hard and grabbed. When he got through chewing that tail if there was a flea left it was mincemeat."

I merely mention this in passing to illustrate that experience is a pretty good teacher, and that it must be your own experience — no one's else will do. Your counsels and rules of life are very enlightening and all that, but they are really of little value compared with the hard knocks of actual experience. You may explain to

a boy till you're black in the face that fire is a dangerous element to monkey with, but it takes a few burnt fingers to instill real dread of a cannon-cracker. You are giving me the experience and I have no doubt that it's the best thing that could happen to me. But really, father, you may overdo it. Your anxiety for my future may make my present unduly uncomfortable.

In this connection I am reminded of a story told by the pastor of Tremont Temple in Boston, Dr. George C. Lorimer, in a lecture that I attended. He didn't vouch for the truth of the story, but thought it enforced a moral. "A nestful of linnets," he said, "were in a field in India. Their mother had flown away and left them. They were cold and hungry and flapped their wings and cried. An enormous elephant chanced to note their plight. 'Poor little things,' said the elephant. 'No mother, no one to keep you warm and nestle you. My mother's heart aches for you. I will nestle you and keep you warm.' And the elephant, in pure goodness of heart, sat down upon the nest of poor little linnets."

It may not be out of order to mention  
that you quite frequently sit upon

Your loving son,

PIERREPONT.

P. S. Just a suggestion. A leading grocer here says, that if the labels on our canned goods did not display the name "Graham" so prominently, he thinks he could sell some of them.



LETTER NO. XIII.





## LETTER No. XIII.

*A farmhouse, a farmer's daughter and bucolic pleasures and pastimes give Pierrepont a respite from commercial activities, but not from the study of pig.*

DOOLITTLE MILLS, IND., May 25, 189—

*Dear Father :*

I take it that you are now enough of a philosopher to suppress any surprise you may feel to see a letter dated at this outpost of civilization. I admit that it's somewhat off the beaten track for the distribution of lard and pork products, but I got here legitimately enough, as you shall learn. The people hereabouts raise their own hogs, and I believe it would interest you to see the real article. Their lard is so attractive in appearance that I mistook it for vanilla ice cream when shown some last night, not stopping to think that your simon-pure farmer never uses his cream for such frivolous purposes. However, their stuff showed me that the nearer you get to nature and the farther from the

stock-yards, the more respectable an animal is the pig.

But to the adventure that brought me here. I left for the southern part of the state yesterday morning on the Gatling Gun Express, and all went well until we struck a cow at about noon, a few miles from where I have pitched the Graham headquarters. The cow is now beef, all right, but the locomotive is also scrap-iron. The track was blocked for keeps at the lonely crossing where the horror occurred, and there seemed to be no escape from a dreary wait for the wrecking train. But I investigated, and soon discovered an ancient farmer with a horse whose meridian of life had long since passed, jogging along toward somewhere — anywhere, away from the slough of despond in which the cow had deposited us. I grabbed my samples — which, by the way, are of no earthly use in this section of the world — and begged for transportation. I got it for twenty-five cents and a cigar whose antecedents I fain would forget, and started for the interior.

It was an interesting locality where we brought up. Doolittle's Mills are apparently so named because there's so little

doing in them that the building which gives the place its name looks like a church where all the citizens are atheists. Once a year, in the time of the early spring freshets, they saw a few boards for exercise. But just now the farmers have the call, and the call is usually the tin-horn summons to dinner, which is the only sound that awakes any interest in the people. Just now they are putting in potatoes, corn, and beans, and the only fertilizer they use are cuss words and hard cider, which go well enough together at the start, but don't hitch worth a cent at harvest time.

My rustic benefactor was christened Martin Van Buren Philpot, but long use has shrunk his cognomen considerably, and he is now known as "Vebe." He has a big quiverful of children, the thirteenth of whom arrived about three weeks ago. "Vebe" has named him Theodore Roosevelt, and is still waiting for the silver mug. Says he's afraid the thirteen part of it will queer the kid's chances.

You would like Mrs. Philpot, I think. She is full of homely philosophy and has a face to match. Her cooking, though,

might be improved by a course of training under Oscar of the Waldorf. I don't just remember the sort of biscuits Ma used to produce, but if they were anything like Mrs. Philpot's I can account for your dyspepsia.

The little Philpots are sportive creatures who insist on showing me the pigs about a dozen times a day. I believe I unwarily dropped a hint as to my occupation when I arrived, and they seem to think I want to see pork all the time. They call me the hog man, but they are such innocent kids that I can't show any resentment. This afternoon they took me out to the pasture to view a sit-still's nest. Said the mother bird was on the eggs and wouldn't fly, even when handled. Just before we reached the place two of them ran ahead, and Johnny Philpot clapped his straw hat on the ground and signalled me to hurry.

"She's here, all right, mister," said Johnny, quivering with excitement. "Now you jest stoop down, and when I lift my hat, you grab the bird."

Slowly the brim of yellow straw rose, and with lightning-like celerity I dashed my hand through the opening. Then there

was a sharp click and a wild whoop from myself as a steel trap closed its jaws on my fingers and held on like death. You never saw such delighted children in your life. They danced around me all the while I was trying to get the confounded thing off my hand, and said I "swore orful." I guess I did. After awhile Johnny helped me, and allowed I was real funny. He'll never know how near he came to a violent death in his happy childhood.

The way these simple people combine business and pleasure would be a revelation to the packing house. I saw a good example of this peculiarity at a barn-raising that "Vebe" Philpot arranged for this morning. It showed, too, that the countryman was the original socialist. About forty farmers gathered at the place in vehicles that would simply make the Lake Front howl. Every man then visited the tool-house, where a tin wash-boiler filled with what they call here "horse's neck," a savage compound of whiskey and hard cider, occupied the place of honor. They tell me that "horse's neck" and barn-raising are one and inseparable in these parts, and that any attempt to preach temperance at such

occasions would lead to rioting. I'll do old Philpot the justice to say that his wash-boiler was the real thing, and erred a bit on the side of hard liquor, if anything.

Having gotten themselves in first-class trim, the barn-raisers proceeded to business. The way they do the work is this: Two uprights lying on the ground are fastened top and bottom by crossbeams and a long rope is hitched to each end. About fifteen men attach their persons to each rope, and the other ten jam big crowbars against the bottom beam to prevent its slipping. Then somebody yells "hist her!" and the crowd on the ropes tug like bulls and that part of the frame goes slowly up. They prop this up lightly to prevent its falling, and proceed to get the other end perpendicular in the same fashion. Then up go the sides to be cleated to the end, and the thing is done.

But it wasn't quite done this morning, for just as the second side was being fastened in place by my genial host, who had been boosted up on the corner to do the job, one of the props broke, and the whole blamed frame, including "Vebe," came to the ground in a grand crash. "Vebe"

wasn't hurt very much physically, but his spirits were greatly damaged. Father, you may think you can juggle expletives pretty well, you may believe that Milligan can swear good and plenty; but neither of you ever dreamed of such a Niagara of blue-streaked and sulphur-fumed cuss words as came from that irate farmer. The rest of the crowd lit out, after a farewell visit to the wash-boiler, for, as one weazened old veteran told me confidentially, "When 'Vebe' war in tarntrums it war no use treatin' him like a civilized critter."

To that mishap of the morning I attribute the rather doleful ending of something that occurred this evening. It seems that old Philpot's son Ike got married a day or two ago, and, after the poetic custom of the country, the neighbors determined to give him a serenade. To-night was the chosen time. I guess it was a surprise, all right, for when the awful pandemonium of tin horns, cow-bells, rattles, cracked cornets and whistles broke upon the peaceful air like a blast from a madhouse, old "Vebe" made a dash for his double-barrelled shotgun and let go twice into the crowd.



"Dern fresh fools," he growled, as he cleaned his smoking gun. "Guess that'll season 'em all right." I was horrified and asked him if he wasn't afraid he had killed somebody.

"Kill nuthin'," he snorted. "That thar was good honest rock salt. It'll melt inside their blasted pelts and sting like all possessed, but that's all. Don't you worry about any of 'em dyin', they're too consarned tough."

Of course Ike and his new wife appeared on the scene as soon as the rumpus began, and the young husband bitterly upbraided his dad, until I thought I should have to serve as referee in a good bout then and there. Ike said that the old man had ruined his credit in the town forever; that he never could hold his head up again. He appealed to me, and asked why fathers always wanted to make jackasses of themselves where their sons were concerned. I couldn't tell him, of course. Finally the household quieted down, but the upshot of it is that Ike is going to quit to-morrow and get out a handbill, saying that his father was drunk when the unfortunate affair occurred, and inviting the town to

serenade him again in his new home. You see it's almost a religious point with young couples in this section of the world that their banns be blessed with the most outrageous racket man can devise. They actually feel sort of shame-faced otherwise.

Speaking of banns naturally leads me to remark, that however shy on personal beauty Mrs. Philpot may be, she has a daughter of the A1 pure leaf brand. Her name is Verbena, and she can certainly give points to her namesake in the matter of sweetness. Naturally, she was somewhat upset after the stirring experiences of this evening, and I felt it my duty to restore her equanimity, especially as I was a guest in the house. We sat for quite a while in the best parlor and Verbena grew somewhat confidential. She said she had a beau over at Bumstead Four Corners, but that as a sparker he was about as useful as a pig of lead. Asked me if I didn't think that city men had more real romance and made better husbands. At this point I slowly withdrew my hand from her pretty one, for there was something in the suggestion that looked ominous.

I think I might have kissed Verbena

good-night had not old Philpot appeared on the scene. I am almost inclined to believe that he had some notion as to what I meditated and that he was simply a little ahead of time. For, before coming to my room to write, I strolled out for a smoke and met one of Philpot's neighbors, a garrulous old fellow.

"Verbena's a likely gal," was the way he opened on me. I admitted it. "Engaged yit?" was his astounding query. Quietly but firmly, I denied the soft impeachment. "So-ho" he said, "Vebe's a-gettin' slow."

Curiosity got the better of me and in a half hour's talk I wormed considerable information out of my companion. It seems that the three oldest girls married recently and that their husbands were travelling men who, for some occult reason, had penetrated into this country. In two cases there was an elopement, said my informant.

"What did the father do?" I asked, thinking of old Philpot's shotgun.

"Do?" echoed the old farmer, "waal, he helped the hired man to sot the ladder under Dahlia's window, and when Lobelia skipped with her feller, 'Vebe' routed the hired man out o' bed at two in the morning

to hitch up the best hoss, so's he could fol-  
ler the elopers with the girl's trunk. I tell  
yer, it's tough tripe to have so many dar-  
ters in this country."

I've made up my mind that Verbena's  
flier than she looks and that she and her  
old man have an understanding.

To-morrow I leave this sylvan retreat  
and start cnce more on the pursuit of the  
man who wants pig. I believe this little  
outing has given me new nerve, and that  
you will soon get Orders, More Orders and  
Big Orders, the only trinity you seem to  
think has any holiness in it. I wonder how  
Verbena will take my departure.

Your dutiful son,

PIERREPONT.

P.S. I've been thinking over old Phil-  
pot's rock salt shooting, and it suggests a  
great idea. Why not kill hogs with volleys  
of the stuff, thus obviating the necessity of  
salting 'em?" Do I get a raise for this  
invention?

P.



**LETTER NO. XIV.**



## LETTER No. XIV.

*A companionable deputy sheriff, a hospitable townsman, and "the best-natured wife on earth" inspires Pierrepont's pen to the narration of lively incidents.*

JASPER, IND., July 21, 189—

*My Dear Father:*

I am surprised that my broker should have given you the particulars of my little flyer in short ribs—I mean ribs short—and in future I shall patronize another broker. The few hundreds I made in that deal I had relied upon to dispose of a little bill I owe in Chicago. When it started it wasn't quite so much like the national debt as it is now; but the fact is, I have been carting a deputy sheriff round the country for three weeks, paying for his time and board. Now you want me to return the check, endorsed to the treasurer of some orphanage. If you saw that deputy sheriff you wouldn't have the heart. If I sent you back the check it was lost in the mail and we'll forget it.



I've been so busy arranging to sell car-loads of our stuff that I really haven't been able to write before, but when I got rid of that deputy a great load was removed from my mind. It's a tough thing to go in to try and sell a hard proposition a bill of goods — this *is* a euphemism in our case — and know that the eye of the law is glued upon the show-window, lest you escape by the back door. If I'm to keep up my present spurt in the market you'll have to raise the limit. Thirty a week might do for a drummer when you started business, but for a commercial traveller of to-day it's only tip money. I'm making good now, and if I'm not worth more than thirty I'm useless to you. I may mention in passing that I've had an offer from Soper & Co. to jump over to them. They don't know I'm your son. They know that I'm the same fellow who was at your mailing desk a while back, and probably cannot imagine that you would treat your only the way I was treated. You will agree with me that business is business and I can learn it quite as well selling car lots for Soper as for any one else. A word to the wise — and to the cashier — is sufficient.

Don't worry about my becoming a victim to gambling on margin. Your tip on the market — that you will fire me if I keep it up — is valuable. I will see to it that you hear no more of my trading. I should not have taken this particular flyer had it not been for the fact that you wrote the last sheet of one of your recent letters on the back of a typewritten note from Gamble & Chance, in which they advised you that they had placed your order to sell ribs short. I just made up my mind that what was good enough for pop must be real velvet for sonny. You know you have always urged me to follow your example. I am quite certain that, now you are in possession of the full facts, you will revise your idea about that check. At all events, as I have hinted, that particular check is so full of bank teller's stamps that its own father would scarcely know it.

I never did take much stock in trading "on 'change." It's a form of gambling where interest is sacrificed by the fact that you do not see the ball rolled or the cards dealt. Even when you see the play you may be up against a brace game, so what can you expect when two or three big deal-

ers, like my revered parent, get together and mark the cards for a big game? Anyway, I'd rather bet any day on something straight. If a man gambles on whether the sun will shine or not on certain days he may be unlucky enough to lose every trip, but he will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that no thimble rigging in somebody's back office introduced the clouds.

Finance, as I understand it, is the art of making the other fellow's dollar work for the financier; but this requires a sort of hypnotism that I do not yet possess. I may grow to it; indeed, now that I find myself able to sell the goods manufactured by our house, I am almost afraid to look a mirror in the face lest I discover that I am possessed of the evil eye. The "marts of trade," as the poet puts it, strike me as queer places. The interior of a stock or produce exchange is certainly an understudy for bedlam, if my imagination is correct.

"Give you 86 for C.P. & N.," shouts one.

"No," comes the reply, "want 86 and an eighth."

"All right."

"Sold."

"I'll take 500.'

And nobody takes a thing, for the man who sells it hasn't got it and the man who buys don't want it. No wonder the poor lambs lose their fleece and their heads. Nevertheless, that short-rib check was a life-saver.

I was actually so poor that I had to descend to living in lodgings for three days. Think of it, the heir of Graham & Co. in lodgings! What would "the street" say of that? But I have found that the Graham credit is all covered with N.G.'s at the hotels and I scarcely cared to come home with a deputy sheriff among my excess baggage. So I went into lodgings in an "over Sunday" town. It gave me a lesson on the danger of officiousness that I'm not likely to forget, but, although for a few minutes I could see the danger lights of a sound thrashing dead ahead, it ended pleasantly. Lodgings were hard to find, but the cigar store man finally recommended me to a place. The woman who answered my ring was willing to let me — and the sheriff — a room, but before we arranged terms she took me one side and made an explanation.

Her husband, she said, was apt to stay

out very late at night in convivial company and I might be disturbed by his noise when he came home. I assured her that, as a patron of hotels, I was quite used to this sort of thing, and forthwith negotiated for the use of her front parlor. About two o'clock in the morning we were awakened by the sound of bacchanalian revelry outside the window. I looked out and saw a man on the grassplot in front of the house. He was just able to move — and howl — and his frantic struggles to get on his feet were funnier than Milligan's attempts to put on superior airs.

"Ah, the inebriate husband!" I said to the sheriff, who agreed with me that it would be a good scheme to get him off the lawn and into the house. So we slipped on enough clothing to cover the law and the major part of our persons and went out. The serenader was light weight and we carried him up the steps without difficulty. He stopped singing long enough to roar:

"Whas-yer-doin' — lemme go — lemme go, I tell yer."

"Come to bed," I said, soothingly.

"Done wan ter go ter bed — never go t'

bed Sat'day night," he hiccoughed. "This not (hic) my bed."

We bore him into the front hall, and laid him down to get a fresh hold for the journey upstairs. He was happy again and started a new song. Just then a light appeared at the top of the stairs, and I saw the landlady's face peering over the balustrade. In my most courteous manner I asked:

"Shall we bring him upstairs, madam?"

"Who?" she asked.

"Your husband."

She did not reply, but another voice did. "I am her husband, sir," and another head, with a jolly face and a big moustache, appeared beside the landlady's.

We dumped our operative load across the street and I hid my shamed head in the pillows, making a sacred vow that for ever more I shall keep very busy attending to my own affairs. This led to a very pleasant Sunday for me--and the sheriff--however. The landlady's husband could take a joke--especially when it was on me, and at breakfast we became very good friends. He invited me to his club and we--and the legal limb--spent the afternoon

there. His face grew bigger and jollier each hour, and finally he became very confidential. Referring to his own peccadilloes, he made the statement that he had the best-natured wife in the world. I had no reason to controvert this, but he seemed to think that I doubted it, and went on to accumulate testimony.

"We've never had a quarrel yet, though we've been married sixteen years," he declared. "I'll bet that no matter what I might do when I go home, she'd smile through it all."

This didn't interest me, but my legal guardian seemed curious. He even went so far as to doubt our friend. It wasn't long before they had patched up some sort of a wager between them. The husband was to go home to supper, appear intoxicated, raise a row, break dishes and otherwise generally make an ass of himself. If his wife kept her temper it was on the sheriff, and *vice versa*.

Bill — his name was William Jenks — started off ahead. We were to follow at a distance and observe results from the yard. Bill began to totter and sway as he neared the house, and presently Mrs. J. ran out of

the front gate to meet him. She picked up his hat from the ground, brushed it and put it on, and then kissed him. Then she guided his uncertain legs into the house. When we reached the window which looked into the parlor we saw Bill sitting on the floor, howling incoherencies at his wife, who was trying to help him pull off his shoes. When they were off he commanded: "Put 'em on the mantelpiece," and she did it. Then he got up and staggered across the room and fell, just before he reached a sofa.

"What did yer pull sofa 'way for?" he howled.

"Oh, William, forgive me. I didn't know. I'm so awkward. Did you hurt yourself?" And she tried to help him up. But he wouldn't get up, and continued to abuse her like a pickpocket. Finally she induced him to go into the dining-room and sit down at the supper table. As a prelude he shied a teacup past her head and against the wall. Then he pulled away the tablecloth and with it the dishes, and sat down on the floor amid the ruins.

What did that wonder of a woman do but plump down on the floor in front of him



and say, with a smile as of gratified pleasure, "Why, William, isn't this nice? We haven't eaten on the floor since we were married. So like the old picnic days!" Then she tried to rearrange the broken crockery and rescue the supper. It was too much for me, and I guess Bill thought he had gone far enough, for he began to smile and abandoned his assumed inebriety.

"Mary, my dear," he said, "I brought home a couple of friends to supper. They're outside and —"

"Brought home friends to supper," cried his wife, jumping to her feet, "brought them home to supper, did you, without notice to me, when you knew it was Sally's afternoon out? I'll teach you," and she set both hands in his hair and shook him. "I've stood your freaks for sixteen years and been patient and loving, but this is more than human nature is capable of. Friends? No warning? What would they think of me?"

Our entrance relieved the tragedy, but Jenks was terror-stricken. The surprise was too much for him. For the first time he realized that even the most docile of women have reservations and that every

worm has some turning point. He finally explained the joke and it was received with his wife's smiles. He was desperately anxious to square himself and then and there presented her with twenty dollars, to which the sheriff added the ten-dollar bill which he insisted he had lost on the wager. I saw Jenks the following evening. "You'll never guess," he said, "what that woman did with the thirty?"

I acknowledged my incapacity to cope with the subject.

"Bought me a smoking-jacket, a meerschaum pipe and three boxes of Havanas. And, my boy," he added, "I've quit drinking. She's so good that I'm going to see all I can of her in my lifetime, for we'll keep house separately in the next world."

I guess he's right, for they'll certainly feel called upon to build a special alcove in heaven when she reaches there.

Your snappy observation that the poorest men on earth are the relations of millionaires strikes me in a very sensitive spot. I realize its truth, and I can assure you that if something is not done speedily to decrease the discrepancy between my income and my outgo, there will be a sensa-

tional story for the newspapers, with cuts — cuts of you and me, with possibly a picture of the hog plant thrown in for decorative purposes. If you think this would be a good ad., I'll play the cards as they lay. If not, please see to it that my expense accounts are accepted more in the spirit in which they are made.

My ex-guardian, the sheriff, has given me many pointers on how to escape the debt trap — it was after I settled his particular claim — but I don't think you'd care to have me get a reputation as a shirker of obligations. Sometimes, though, the escapes from the clutches of the law are very amusing. The sheriff tells of a good one that happened recently in Indianapolis. It seems that a young spendthrift was arrested for debt on the very day he was to be married to a wealthy widow. Knowledge of his plight would put an end to his expectations in this direction, and he was at his wits' ends as the two officers escorted him along the street.

In front of the City Hall a carriage was standing and as they approached the mayor of the city entered it and conversed for a moment through the window with a friend.

Mr. Spendthrift had an inspiration and said to the officers: "You know that gentleman who got into that carriage?"

"Yes," said one of them, "It's Mayor B——."

"Well, he's my uncle, and if I ask him he'll see me out of this thing. You'll take his guarantee, of course.

The deputies thought it would be satisfactory and when they reached the carriage the men hung back. The young man took off his hat and put his head into the carriage window just as it was about to start.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Mayor," he said, "but there are two men with me who have influence in the seventh ward. They say they'll be glad to work for you at the election next week if you'll give them any encouragement."

"Very well," said the mayor, "bring them here."

The spendthrift beckoned to the deputies and they approached. The mayor looked them over and said: "Come around to my office at 5 o'clock this afternoon and I'll fix up this matter." Then he drove off and the spendthrift borrowed half a dollar of

one of the deputies, went and got shaved and then married.

I simply mention this to illustrate to what extremities an appetite for truffles and mushrooms may lead a young man whose pocket money prescribes cheese sandwiches and spinach. For the honor of the name I must not be permitted to be set down as deficient in credit. This really *must* appeal to you. As you say, a man must not overwork a dollar, and the thirty of them I am now receiving per week get fatigued to a standstill within twenty-four hours after I make their acquaintance.

Yours in trust,

P.

P. S. I would respectfully suggest that you do not show this letter to mother. The story of Bill Jenk's wife might not appeal to her.



*The Son's Society Girl.*



LETTER NO. XV





## LETTER No. XV.

*The oddities and humors of railroad travels appeal so strongly to Pierrepont that he writes his father of them, as well as of a breach-of-promise suit.*

FALL LAKE, Mich., Sept. 7, 189—

*Dear Father:*

Replying to your last budget of aphorism and advice, I must say that it pains me somewhat to find my own father skeptical as to the history of the fish I caught at Spring Lake. The only lies I have ever told thus far have been on the road for Graham & Co., and I'm not going to begin any outside prevaricating on such trivial articles as fish. By the way, why do they use the term "fish stories" as a generic description for falsehoods? If the world only knew its business, "pork yarns" would be the synonym henceforth and forevermore.

But a truce to the finny tribe! I note with joy that the wisdom of the "House" has decreed that I am to be assistant manager

of the lard department on my return. Now, to be honest, there's nothing very fascinating about tried-out pig fat, but the prospects of staying in good old Chicago right along atone for anything. We college men at first condemn our city because it seems the right and proper thing to do, after Boston; but let me tell you that a few months on the road will knock all that nonsense out of a fellow for good, and he's willing to swear that old "Chi" is the nearest copy of the New Jerusalem that's yet been invented.

Allow me to congratulate you on your good taste, my dear father, in gilding the lard pail with the fifty per you mention. I haven't sold so very many goods, but I like to see that you recognize good intentions. I have always believed that the Graham products could be made to sell better if certain imperfections could be eliminated, and these I have tried to point out to you, from time to time. It speaks well for your good sense that you haven't got offended at my blunt speech. Of course I can't help feeling elated, also, at my rapid rise in the business. It isn't every young man who can climb from eight

dollars a week to fifty in about a year; it only goes to prove my pet theory that to the son of the "old man" all things are possible.

I'm coming back to town with the firm determination to make the manager of the lard department look like three battered dimes. As you say, it's my business to do my work so well that I can run the department without him, and I'm going to bring that about pretty deuced quick, because I need his job. I rely on your shrewd sense of economy to fire him the moment he becomes superfluous.

Your observation to the effect that a man who can't take orders can't give them, may be true enough in the pork-packing business, but did you ever watch a Pullman car conductor? The only person I can conceive of giving him orders is the porter, and I presume there's sufficient *esprit de corps* to lead the subordinate functionary to at least make a pretence of deference due, and take out all his bossing on the passengers. As you must be aware from the way I've been eating my way through mileage books, I've made some long jumps lately. It was necessary, for as soon as I gladdened

your paternal heart by becoming the "car lot man" you once expressed some doubt of my ever being, I saw at once that I had no business in towns where a car load of anybody's lard — to say nothing of ours — would last so long as to become eventually a public nuisance. My long railroad trips have broadened my point of view of life materially, and have incidentally given me no little amusement.

I tell you, father, outside of your letters there's no place where human nature can be studied so well as on a railroad train; whether it is the nervous strain of travel, or the clickety-click of the wheels, or the rapid motion, a man on a train comes pretty near acting out his real nature. It's pretty hard to be a hero to a "Limited" conductor. Thanks to the methods of American railroading, democracy is at its zenith on the cars. True, we have gradations, but the people who ride second-class are seldom appealing, while the parlor car is really very little of a barrier against the touching elbows of the most diverse elements of society. For a collection of all sorts, commend me to the parlor coach of an express. You are quite as likely to be

bled in a game of freeze-out in the smoker next to the buffet, as you are in a less expensive portion of the train.

There was a very merry crowd of traveling men on the "Gilt-Edge" Express the other afternoon when I came through. It was a hot day and very few of the boys took the parlor, preferring the greater freedom from constraint of the ordinary smoker. If this had not been the case, perhaps the incident which I am to relate—merely as a warning to you, for I know you take the "Gilt-Edged" occasionally—might not have occurred.

The train stops at the Junction, you know, about ten minutes, and the majority of the boys got down to stretch their legs on the platform and get a bit of air, for even Indiana air is better than no air at all. As I strolled along, smoking, my attention was attracted by a young woman who was pacing slowly up and down the extreme end of the platform. As I am not especially observant of the fair sex, the fact that I noticed her at all is proof that she was considerably out of the ordinary in the feminine line. In fact, she was ripe fruit from the very top layer.

She had a music roll under her arm, and a tailor-made gown that, fitting perfectly, showed that not quite all the modern Venuses have been corralled for the "show-girl" department of musical comedy. It was little wonder, then, that one of the band of travelling men should have disentangled himself from his fellows and extended his promenade up into the reservation affected by the Beauty, for closer inspection subsequently proved that she was entitled to the name and to the initial capital I've employed. The two paced up and down, as people will, and passed each other several times. It chanced that just as this passing was about to occur again, the music roll fell to the platform. A raised hat, a returned music roll, a smile, a murmured "thank you," were the preludes to a more extended conversation.

I noted that at the fall of the music roll a slight laugh arose from several of the older fellows, but I paid no attention to it at the time, being otherwise engaged. When the train started the young woman was helped into the parlor car by her new acquaintance, and provided with a seat which, as he put it, he had secured for his

sister, who, at the last moment, had postponed her journey. He was rather young, this travelling man, so his trepidation is explained. It was scarcely necessary, as I have since learned, for him to sneak out and surreptitiously pay for both seats. It was surprising how this little incident affected the railroad business. Almost all the drummer clan moved up into the parlor coach. I imagined at the time that they envied their associate his prize and wished at least to share his very evident satisfaction by witnessing it.

The young man was most gallant, and everything that the train boy offered, from the latest novel to chocolates and smelling salts, was left in the young woman's custody. Never have I seen a train boy who made as many trips in a given time. The dining car had been put on at the Junction — the train, you know, gets in just between hay and grass on the meal question — and the porter's announcement had scarcely left his lips before the couple were at the table. Most of the boys went, too, and watched with evident delight the exquisite taste and lavish appetite with which the young woman selected from the *a la carte*



menu. I was one of the few who saw the check after it was all over, and its duplicate would practically annihilate half a week's salary for me.

It was over quite soon, for, just as the pair had begun to sip their cordial, the train whistled and slowed down. I thought there must have been an accident, for the train is an express with no stops indicated between the Junction and the terminus. But the young woman was better posted, for she interrupted the flow of conversation and *liqueur*, by gathering up the benefices heaped upon her, for sundry considerations, by the train boy. The young man expostulated, but she nodded her head and said something in a low tone. Just then the conductor of the regular train came into the dining car.

"Oh, there you are, Bessie! I thought I'd find you here. Hurry now! Remember, you nearly got a fall yesterday by being slow."

The car was rosy with grinning faces by this time, but the red flush on the young man's cheeks was certainly the most conspicuous feature. But I am pleased to say that he kept a stiff upper lip and assisted

the young woman off the train. When he returned it was on the run — in the gathering up of the books, boxes and magazines, the young woman had forgotten her music roll. He had to throw it at her as the train rolled ahead. There was no hope for him; he had to go back into the dining car, for the check had not been paid.

As he opened the door he met the porter and hurled one question at him. "Why in thunder did the train stop here?"

"Stops ebry day, sir," answered the grinning son of Ham. "Dere's a bridge ahead an' we has to slow down, an' as Miss Bessie's de engineer's daughter, he makes it a full stop so she kin ride home on the Express."

It was really pitiful what the young man was forced to endure as he walked back to his table. It is but simple justice to him to say that he stood his ground bravely, doubled the denomination of his check for the benefit of his guyers, and tried to drop vague hints as to future carriage rides.

It was of no avail, however, for every man jack of them, except himself, knew that Bessie was an established institution on the "Gilt Edge," and that it was accounted

a pretty dull trip when she failed to add to the revenue of the dining car. Of course she is doing a certain sort of good in the world, on her daily trip from her music lesson, in taking some of the conceit out of fresh young men, but I really think it would be quite as well for her if she rode on the engine with her father.

The balance of that run was devoted to stories of somewhat similar experiences. Job Withers—he is sure to be around when anything happens—told one on himself which sounded a bit apochryphal, but is nevertheless worth repeating, as illustrating how easy it is to simplify a situation by speaking the right word at the right time. As Job tells it, he draws a verbal picture of a very pretty girl in a crowded car and confesses to having honored her with glances more admiring than strictly decorous.

“She was a beauty, boys, and no mistake, and I envied the old lady who sat with her. When the old lady left the train I sauntered out upon the platform and stayed there till the train slowed down for the next stop. Then I wandered in again and, stopping beside the young Hebe, I

inquired in my most dulcet tones, 'Is this seat engaged, miss?'

"She looked up straight into my face, and her baby-blue eyes seemed to be making a bill of lading of me. Then she spoke up in a sweet, clear, distinct voice, that must have been heard in every part of the car. 'No,' she said, 'this seat isn't engaged, but I am, and *he* is just getting aboard the train.'

"And he was, six feet seven of him, with hands like friend Piggy's hams. I tell you, boys," concluded Job, "I felt about as cheap as the man who raised a warranted watch-dog from a pup, taught him to fetch and carry things, and, when burglars broke into the house, discovered their presence without his dog's assistance, and found that the faithful brute was doing credit to his training by trotting about after the burglars with their lantern in his mouth."

I got quite a shock to-day by the receipt of a letter, forwarded from Chicago, from one Silas Pettingill, attorney at Doolittle's Mills, Ind., informing me that Miss Verbena Philpot had decided to sue for breach of promise in the sum of \$10,000. The only way in which this calamity could be

staved off, according to Mr. Pettingill, was by my going to Doolittle's Mills and making "other arrangements," which I firmly decline to do. Verbena is all right on her native heath, but I fear that transplanting her to Chicago wouldn't be healthful for her or me. Talk about your simple, confiding farmers and all that sort of rubbish! I believe that if old "Vebe" Philpot should come to Chicago and walk up and down State street a couple of times, he would have the biggest bunco artist in town skinned to his last nickel before sundown. As it is, however, the thing looks rather ugly, and I don't know but I had better be absent from home for a year or so. Why couldn't I be made manager of your London branch instead of monkeying with the lard department?

Your threatened son, P.

P.S. In some roundabout way you may hear of the train escapade with the engineer's daughter. The boys on the road are no respecters of persons and are likely to make most any one the hero of a story. Should some hint connecting me with the affair reach you, it will be only necessary to recall that you heard the story first from me.

LETTER NO. XVI.



## LETTER No. XVI.

*The Game of Golf, a most peculiar banquet, a social lion's fall and his escape from threatening legal meshes, inspire Pierre-pont's pen.*

CHICAGO, Sept. 20, 189—

*Dear Father :*

Your little joke about being almost well and about broke at Carlsbad strikes me as about the limit in sarcastic humor. It's always so easy for millionaires to talk about being broke, that they're about the only ones who do it. It's the same with clothes, you know. If I dressed like Russell Sage, you wouldn't have me in the lard department ten minutes. On the whole, I guess you'll get back somehow, even if you have to draw on London for a thousand or two.

I don't mind telling you that I'm doing great work in my new position. I don't know whether the manager of the lard section could do without me or not, but I'm dead sure I could do without him, for



a more pompous ass never yet brayed in an office. He told me to-day that I ought to be very thankful for the accident of birth, and I countered on him by telling him he ought to be devilish glad my father was a good-natured man. I think that when you get home, we'll revolutionize this department. I can already see that there is great waste going on here; the amount of hog fat they are putting into the lard is simply scandalous.

While I think about it, I want to ask you if you can't find a good place for my old college friend, Courtland Warrington. Court is a perfect gentleman, and would be an ornament to the packing house, if you could only manage to keep him out of Milligan's way. I think that wild Irishman would kill him if he ever caught sight of his stockings. Of course Courtland ought to have something that wouldn't grate on his refined tastes and dignified style. Pasting labels on cans might do, but I don't think sorting livers would appeal to him. Anyway, I rely on you to fix up something nice and genteel for Court; he is very unfortunate in having an unsuccessful father.

I'll tell the Beef House people to look up the export cattle business, as you request, and tell it to 'em good and hard. If there's anything I like to do it's to give orders to fellows that are not under me; I believe this shows that I have the making of a successful business man concealed within me. I'd like to know, however, what this General Principle is you speak of as being in my department; up to now I never thought there was any principle in it.

Don't worry that I am to become a golf maniac, dear dad. My first day on the links was my last, and the article you saw in that Chicago paper about my appearance as a putter was very misleading. The fact is that I had gotten half around the promenade when I unfortunately allowed my brassy-niblick, or something of that sort, to come into contact with my caddy's head, and the game ended at the moment he was carried away on a stretcher. The caddy's father, a bullet-headed Dutchman, who was utterly unamenable to reason, had me arrested for assault and battery, and it made terrible inroads into my surplus to get him to withdraw the charge

and to square the police reporters. No golf for Pierrepont, so you may calm your perturbed spirit. If I want highballs, I know where I can connect with 'em, and the place isn't a thousand miles from the packing house, either. Curiously, they have a concoction there known as a "Graham Fertilizer." I tried one, and I must say that the man who could drink two must have a stomach of brass.

Speaking of the stomach reminds me of a banquet. I can't imagine how it happened, but when the news leaked out that you had gone to Europe, so soon after calling me in from the road, the impression gained currency in some quarters that I had been placed in charge at the "House." You will appreciate that it's a pretty leathery sort of a proposition to have to go around denying a report that your own father has done the square thing by you, and explaining that you are in reality only first assistant manager of the lard department, and that a salt-pickled Celt named Milligan is still so far above me that I get a crick in the neck looking up at his exaltedness.

So I decided that the best thing I could

do was not to deny the rumor and to accept all the honors likely to be thrust upon me. This may be obtaining distinction under false pretences, but it's less embarrassing than confessing that one's father is so thoroughly under the domination of a man who eats, drinks, sleeps and thinks pig, as to ignore the claims of blood and heredity. What could I do, for instance, when a number of friends proposed to give a banquet in my honor? If I had refused they would have said that I was a hog myself, besides being in the business; for people who get up banquets for other people are really only seeking an excuse to give themselves a good time. How could I disappoint them?

Anyway, the banquet came off on the appointed date. It was really an elaborate affair, the sixty guests sitting at tables fairly buried in flowers. It was doubtless thought to be a delicate compliment to the guest of the evening—meaning your only—that a few feet down the table at whose head I sat, and facing towards me, stood the life-sized figure of a hog, done in white roses and with a pail of our lard in its mouth; but I submit that there *are* better

appetizers than a reminder of the source of our prosperity. I accepted the situation and swallowed the pig — metaphorically, of course — with all the grace I could assume.

The menu card at my plate was an elegant affair, evidently handwork, and was different in design from those of the others, although I was kept too busy in conversation with my neighbors to read it. The service of the dinner was perfect, the well-trained waiters moving noiselessly to and fro and depositing the various courses without a word. A special attendant had evidently been assigned to me and I appreciated the distinction. The food that he served me, however, was, to say the least, peculiar. The soup tasted queer — like medicine; the oysters were replaced by curious tasting lumps served on shells, while the fish course was fishy enough in smell, but tasteless.

I had eaten practically nothing, and when the *entrees* brought me only a spoonful of something that looked surprisingly like hash, I looked around at the other fellows. I saw twinkling eyes, some of which fell upon the plates in front of their owners. A glance at the plates of my nearest neigh-

bors showed that they were being served with quite different food from that which reached me. I began to smell something familiar, and surreptitiously glanced at my menu. The first thing that struck my eye was this line in gilt letters at the bottom :

“This dinner prepared from recipes in Graham’s celebrated booklet, ‘100 Dainty Dishes from a Can.’”

You should hear the roar that went up, as the crowd saw that I was no longer shut out of their executive session. I could do no less than order up a case of wine (which you, of course, will pay for and charge to advertising account), and after that they let me have something to eat. It’s a terrible thing to have one’s father’s business chickens come home to roost so frequently. I did not recover from this affair for two days, which will explain the absence from the office, of which I have no doubt Milligan has duly informed you.

I have had a hearty laugh over your story of Hank Smith and his attempt to butt into Boston society with money, a brass band and fireworks. Hank made the great mistake of thinking that noise would go very far on Beacon street. And this just nat-

urally reminds me of Baron Bonski, a self-made social lion, who had Boston's upper-tendom on tiptoe about the time I was a freshman in college. Bonski's method was the very antithesis of Hank's, and it worked as long as he chose to have it.

The Baron floated gently into Boston one spring day, armed with letters of introduction to a few of the *litterati* from men of prominence in Europe. He straightway attended various "afternoons" of poets, artists and Bohemian philosophers. He was a little chap with a sad, pale face, dark and soulful eyes, a voice as mellow as new cider, and a gift of gab unceasing as the flow of the tides. He hinted at tragic love affairs and allowed it to get around that he had been expelled from Russia for revolutionary work. He was modest and retiring, and the more he retired at the literary functions the more people tumbled over themselves to dig him out. He made a distinct hit without doing anything in particular, except to look pensive and sow a crop of romantic rumors.

The Baron quickly got next the residence problem in Boston. He hired a room in a side street, just far enough off Beacon

street to be cheap, and just near enough to catch the sacred aroma of that classic thoroughfare. He filled up his place with Oriental toggery, and kept it lighted dimly and religiously with queer Eastern lanterns. A mysterious odor always hung over the apartment. Here the Baron began to receive the swells at five o'clock teas, over which he presided with a huge samovar. The thing was so new, so captivating, so full of charm, that half the society women in town, including Mrs. "Bob" Tiller, the leading lady of the whole bunch, used to drop in quite informally.

They do say that the Baron became pretty well acquainted with the interiors, not to speak of boudoirs, of a good many of the great houses in town, and that his living expenses were pretty small during his first year in Boston.

But in an evil hour Baron Bonski fell. He decided that he wanted more money, and he could conceive no better way of getting it than by writing novels. He found a publisher easily enough, and then he used his knowledge of society people for his books. He paraded the foibles of his friends under thin disguises, and even trotted out Mrs. "Bob" as one of his leading characters.



The novels were pretty poor stuff, on the whole, but they got everybody hot, and the Baron's social star went down behind the horizon with a thud. Then his creditors began to worry him, his later books failed, ugly stories about his fraudulent title got around, and finally a brother novelist lampooned *him*. At last the town, which had warmed toward him at first, got too hot to hold him, and he resigned in favor of the next impostor.

I simply mention the Baron's case to show you that you can get into Boston society all right by knowing just how to do it, but that you've got to stick to your original *rôle* if you want to stay there.

You will be gratified to learn that the little difficulty with Verbena Philpot and her pa is at an end. Although, when I asked your advice on how to meet the absurd charge, you politely informed me that it was my breach-of-promise suit, I know you will be glad not to find this particular Verbena blooming beneath your roof-tree. When you refused to aid me with your vast experience, I went to see George Damon, who graduated from Harvard Law in my sophomore year. I told him the facts and

he looked so solemn that I made up my mind that all was over, and I tried to decide between Canada and South America as a place of residence. He never even laughed when I told him that old man Philpot had the reputation of bribing the drivers of rural conveyances to lose a tire off a wheel when they were driving by his place with an eligible stranger as passenger.

"You won't marry the girl?" he asked. With as much courtesy to Verbena as I could at the time command, I replied in the negative.

"How much can you give to settle the thing?" came next. I said almost any sum, but it would have to be in expectancy, for you had definitely declared yourself against any appropriation to take up mortgages for indigent farmers with beguiling daughters.

"But you must get out of this without publicity," he said. "You'd be the laughing stock of the town."

I admitted it sadly and he said he would do what he could. He began by writing letters, but Papa Philpot was evidently too old a bird to be caught by legal chaff.

It was settle up, or marry and settle down, and that settled it. Finally, Damon told me that there was only one chance for me. He would go down to Doolittle's Mills and see the old man in person and try and argue him out of it. I was deeply grateful that he should make it such a personal matter, but he said it wasn't much, he needed a vacation anyway.

Well, he went about three weeks ago and I accompanied him to the railroad station in a great state of nervousness. Three days later I received a letter from him stating that, although he had not sounded the old man yet, he had some hopes. Two other letters reached me within the next week, but no definite result had been attained.

Then I heard no more and for the last fortnight I have dreamt of bridal wreaths that changed into halters and wedding-cake with iron bars embedded in the frosting. Yesterday I received this telegram :

"NIAGARA FALLS, Sept. 19.

I am on my wedding tour. Verbena sends kind regards.

George Damon."

I am much relieved, but my mind will not be at complete rest till I find out whether Damon is a modern martyr or just plain damn fool.

Your freed son,  
Pierrepont.

P.S. I wonder if Damon — but there are some things in life before which even the most riotous imagination falters.



LETTER NO. XVII.



## LETTER No. XVII.

*A boomerang wager, a story of Illinois justice, and  
a futile attempt at small economy, furnish  
the inspiration for Pierrepont's  
correspondence.*

CHICAGO, Oct. 21, 189—

*Dear Father:*

The enclosed clippings will doubtless prove even more explanatory to you than to me. I regret to learn from them and others—for all the newspapers had it—that you are being squeezed by being short on November lard. Couldn't you substitute some of the September variety that we have been unable to sell? It is naturally surprising to learn that you have become so involved, when I recall the wealth of good advice you have given me to avoid this sort of thing. I realize that you have the justification of a long line of precedent in not practicing what you preach, but do you think it wise to jeopardize the future of the "House" by being mixed up in deals



of this sort, especially when you are not at home to look after them? Of course, had you placed the matter in my charge, the conditions to-day would be quite different.

The gambling mania — and what is dealing in futures of grain or pork but gambling? — is certainly a terrible disease to encourage. No one who begins knows where he will leave off. Of course I do not presume to comment on your conduct; these remarks are purely impersonal; but I must admit that I am glad you did not include Monte Carlo in your European itinerary. The late John T. Raymond, the actor, used to say that he'd gambled away several acres of business blocks. Not that he ever owned any, but he might have done so had he not gambled. For he lost, as every man who gambles does in the long run, I am told. He would bet on anything, from the time of day to the complexion of the next person to turn a corner.

His infirmity was well known in the theatrical profession and sometimes advantage was taken of it to lay pre-arranged wagers in which Raymond must get the worst of it. A veteran actor whom I met the other evening tells of an incident of

this sort. It occurred here in Chicago years ago, when Raymond was playing "Mulberry Sellers" at McVickers. One afternoon he came into the hotel office and sat down to chat with some friends. As he crossed one leg over the other, a particularly striking pattern of fancy sock was exposed to view. Some one commented on the brilliant colors and Raymond held up his foot and looked at it admiringly.

"Isn't it great?" he said. "I found that in Wanamaker's in Philadelphia. I guess they had the only line, for I've never seen a duplicate of the pattern."

"Come now, Mr. Raymond," spoke up a young actor. "They don't have all the good things in Philadelphia. Chicago has anything that any city has."

"Most things, young man," laughed Raymond, "but not a stocking like this," and he surveyed it again critically. "No sir-ee, there's not another stocking like it in Chicago, I'll bet."

"What will you bet?" asked the young man quickly, with a laugh.

"Oh, anything," answered Raymond.

"Cigars for the crowd?"

"Certainly, and the best in the house," agreed the actor.

"You bet, Mr. Raymond, that there's not another stocking in Chicago like that one?"

"Yes."

"Well, what's the matter with the one on your other foot?" cried the young man, triumphantly, while a roar of laughter went up from the bystanders.

"Well," drawled Raymond, "strangely enough, young man, you have propounded a conundrum for which I've been unable to find an answer. What *is* the matter with the stocking on my other foot? This is the way it came back from the laundry." He pulled up his trouser leg and exhibited a faded stocking that looked as if it had been exposed to some powerful bleach. "This certainly isn't like the other one. Now if there *is* one in Chicago I'd like to have it, for I never did care for a fancy-matched span."

The young man had no zest for further search. His own joke, the inspiration of the moment, had turned upon him and the arrival of the cigars he knew to be the best antidote for the general laughter and jests of which he was the victim.

This instance of circumstances and a



*The Son as Manager of his Father's  
Pork-packing Establishment.*



laundry conspiring to defeat a practical joker may not have a dyed-in-the-wool moral, but it has a philosophical ring and I have often noted that your wise saws and modern instances often sound better than they look when dissected. *Par example*, I fail to see the application to me of your sententious observation that some men do a day's work and then spend six days admiring it. From your knowledge of me, as expressed in your letters, you **cannot** believe me guilty of the day's work. As for self-admiration, the glass which you are constantly holding before me is no flatterer, and conceit has been thumped out of me with the unremitting persistency of a pile-driver. After the perusal of one of your letters, I always feel so small that if I looked as I felt I'd be valuable as a midget.

As you say, there is room at the top, but not much elsewhere. That's just exactly how I feel about the pork-packing business. In order to expedite my progress I, day before yesterday, informed the manager of the lard department that either he or I would have to quit the employ of Graham & Co. In case he decided that I had better go, I

warned him that it was my intention to take the first European steamer to lay certain facts before you. I knew that it would be no use for me to appeal to Milligan, for it is a bed-rock principle of that dignitary's life that I am always wrong. The next day the manager of the lard department was not on hand. Milligan asked for him and I said, "I am the manager."

"Umph!" he grunted. (Did you ever notice how exceedingly porcine is Milligan's grunt?) "Where's Welch?"

"I discharged him yesterday," I replied.

"You — *you* discharge him? It's impossible. You have no right," blustered your Hibernian auxiliary.

"Haven't I the right?" I answered. "Well, perhaps not." Then I told him one of my stock stories, a true tale of Illinois in the early days. A newly appointed Justice of the Peace had as his first case a charge of horse stealing. The accused man's guilt was palpable enough and there were grounds for belief that a recent epidemic of this sort of thieving was to be attributed to him. At all events the J. P. decided that it was no case for half way

measures and that he would try it himself without wasting time getting together a jury. In about fifteen minutes he found the prisoner guilty and ordered the constable to get the nearest available rope and hang the condemned directly. The horse thief had a friend within hearing, who, when he saw how things were going, went in hot haste after the only lawyer the settlement boasted. The lawyer, inspired by a liberal retainer, galloped up in hot haste and sought the Justice of the Peace.

"Your honor," he exclaimed at the close of a fervent plea, "you have no jurisdiction or power to condemn the prisoner to death. You can only hold him for a higher court. You cannot hang him."

"Wa-al," said the justice, aiming a quid of tobacco at the window, "you seem to know a lot about the law an' I'm obleeged to you. But as to hanging this man, if you'll look out that thar window p'raps you'll change your mind as to whether I kin do it or not." And he pointed calmly to a most potent argument, a body swinging from the end of a limb of a neighboring tree.

"I may not have the right," I added to Milligan, "to fire Welch, but, by George, I had the power, for he's gone."



The fact is — I didn't tell Milligan, for I wouldn't give him the satisfaction — I happened to learn that Welch was giving the "House" the double cross. For half a dozen years he's been running a sort of illicit still for lard and been selling it on the quiet to our customers. As our business has grown rapidly and as his sales were but a flea bite, it was not noticed until I probed his secret.

If it hadn't been for my affection for exercise about a green table I shouldn't have spoiled Welch's sport.

Old Si Higginbotham came to town last week and I met him one evening when he was pretty well steam-heated. He insisted on trying to tear up the cloth with a cue and, for the trade's sake, I gave him his head. The more games we played — with lubricants — the mellower he became, and before I could get him to bed he had wept the color completely out of the shoulder of my coat. Incidentally he blurted out about Mr. Welch's neat side line, and after I had verified the facts I taxed him with it.

As I do not want to interfere too much in the business during your absence, I have appointed no successor to my former place as assistant manager of the lard depart-

ment, but am holding down both salaries. There is really no need of an assistant. The only duty of the manager is to boss the assistant and you ought to hear me order myself around.

I'm not particularly enraptured with the job, and if you think I deserve further promotion please cable (at my expense).

You will be pleased, I know, to learn that a week ago Thursday I quit smoking. It may sound strange to you when I say that I did it simply and solely because I was argued into it. I met Fred Penny-packer—paying teller in the Michigan National, you know—and offered him a cigar, which he declined, with the information that he had not smoked for five years.

"Heart trouble?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "marriage."

"Oh, wife objected?"

"Not at all," he answered. "Mrs. Penny-packer likes the odor of a good cigar. The fact is, Graham, after little Ernest came"—his boy—"I made up my mind to begin a special bank account for him by denying myself something. So I determined that it should be smoking, which did me no real good and cost a lot, for I cared only for the

best cigars. I found it was costing me on an average over a dollar a day for tobacco. So ever since I have placed \$30 a month to the young man's credit in the savings bank. In five years, with compound interest and a little extra change, it has amounted to nearly \$2,000. When he is twenty-one it will be the nucleus of a fortune. Try it, Graham, it's much better than smoking."

I suggested that I had no son to make it an object. "Well, you may have," was the reply, "and even if you don't you may be glad some day you've got the money."

I fancy that perhaps he was thinking of the rumors that have placed you in a particularly splintery corner on November lard. But I thought of what he said several times and the next day, after trying in vain to smoke a cigar that I found in your desk, I decided to relegate smoking to the list of my banished small vices. That was a week ago last Thursday. Last Friday, day before yesterday, I met Pennypacker in the Palmer House café.

"Hello, Fred," I said, "I want to tell you something. I've followed your advice."

"Advice? What advice?" he asked.

"Why, to quit smoking and save the money."

"Did I tell you that?" he asked nervously, as he fumbled in his breast-pocket.

"Certainly. You told me about little Ernest and — why, what are you doing?" He had pulled a case from his pocket and was biting off a cigar. "I thought you —"

"Didn't smoke, eh? Well, I didn't till yesterday, when that blasted savings bank suspended."

I resumed smoking Friday. In fact, Pennypacker and I had a regular smoke-talk. I've decided that if ever I save money it will not be by small personal economies. I've made up my mind that, as a general rule, economy is only a species of self-deception. The man who walks two or three miles to save car-fare gets the exercise as a bonus, but what sense is there in using postal cards to save postage and then sending telegrams to hurry up the answer? There was a fellow in college whose mania was to save shoestrings. He thought they ought to wear as long as the shoes and sooner than indulge in the lavish expenditure of a nickel for a new pair, he'd cover his feet all over with knots and

blacken up twine with ink. Yet when this chap wanted a cuspidor, nothing but an \$18 majolica affair would satisfy him.

The man who makes his money by slow savings seldom knows when he's got enough, and even if he finds out he never knows how to let down the bars so that he can enjoy it. Habit is a stern taskmaster and I have no wish to degenerate into a miser. There is, of course, a mean between a spendthrift and a miser, but the difficulty is in determining where it is located.

If I seem prolix on this subject it is because I find that my \$50 salary and that of the late Manager Welch combined, seem to go no farther than did the eight per with which I started my tumultuous business career. If a man has one dollar a week clear he is seldom likely to have very expensive tastes, but give him a few hundred a year more than demanded for the absolute necessities of life and he forthwith becomes a plutocrat in his longings. This may be back-handed philosophy, but it's pretty straight goods so far as the majority of the rising generation are concerned. But I am infringing, dear father, on your chosen prerogative. Let me change the subject.

Why is it that life on the road as a drummer seems to mark a man for life? Every time I meet a commercial traveller in a hotel he invariably fires at me, "What line are you in?" I have changed my tailor three times and have repeatedly altered my style of dress, but still they seem to recognize me as one of them. Can I never shake off the car-marks of the road? I am thinking seriously of taking a course with a professor of deportment, for perhaps it is my manner. I am more inclined to think it due to daily association with Milligan.

The drummer's stock query, "What line are you in?" is natural enough, but it gets to be a bore after a time. Job Withers tells a story that illustrates how it may annoy some people. It also illustrates how smart Job Withers is, which Job's stories usually do. One day, in the train, he says, he sat beside a rather striking-looking man who, he afterward learned, is a professor in Chicago University. Job tried to start up conversation, but with little encouragement.

"Fine day," he ventured.

"Well, yes," said the stranger.

"Pretty good crops."

"Fair."

"Think we'll have a shower?"

"Don't know."

Job didn't give up, but all his questions begot monosyllables. Somewhat nettled, he said at last, "What line are you in?"

"Brains," said the professor, laconically.

"Umph!" said Job, "lucky, isn't it, that you don't have to carry any samples?"

I'm glad your gout is better, father, it will not pain you so much when I try to — but I know you hate slang.

Your rising son,

P.

P. S. Milligan talks a good deal about me around the office. He said this afternoon he expected that some day I'd discharge him. Thus do coming events cast their shadows before.

LETTER NO. XVIII.





## LETTER No. XVIII.

*How an Elder's conscience was amused at a church  
fair, the folly of telling a wife the truth,  
are among Pierrepont's topics.*

CHICAGO, Nov. 2, 189—

*Dear Father :*

I am sending this letter to you, special delivery, care of the New York branch, that you may feel that you are welcomed home. Although you have been abroad but a few weeks, I know that you will be glad to set foot on American soil once more. I wish I could be on hand to meet you and help sing "The Star Spangled," but I want to stay here and keep an eye on Milligan. In my absence he would be very likely to try and queer my record.

It's a great pleasure to find from your last that you don't give a rag for the bulls on pork, because when I heard that they were going to have your heart's blood and make you squeal louder than any hog you ever assassinated, it just naturally made me feel a bit uneasy. I don't want to see the

Graham money go flying on flyers, and ever since you showed me the error of my ways in dabbling in the Open Board, I thought that you, too, must have reformed. However, if you have got the bulls by their tails and can twist 'em till the critters bellow again, I'll forgive your little lapse from righteousness.

But, somehow, I can't help thinking of old Elder Blivins, of the little New Hampshire town where we used to go summers before you got very rich. You remember the Elder,—a tall, thin man, with a conscience as highly developed as dyspepsia. Well, one Sunday he preached a mighty powerful sermon on gambling, and the way he did sock it at the sinners made my young blood run cold. There happened to be several summer visitors in his congregation that day, among 'em Colonel Porter, a big stock-broker of Boston, but that only inflamed the Elder all the more. He declared that the stock market was run by the devil in person, and that every man who took part in those hideous games of chance was predestinedly and tectotally damned. It was a scorcher, and the deacons congratulated him so heartily after

the service that he naturally looked for a fifty-dollar raise in his salary, which was just then running more to potatoes than his needs seem to warrant. Colonel Porter looked a little hot under the frying, but he didn't make a fool of himself by going out.

About the middle of the week the church had a Grand Fair and Sale for the purpose of raising funds to mend the chimney. There were candy tables, flower tables, and knit-goods tables; kissing booths, lemonade stands, cider stands, and coffee stands. But the crowds were always around the grab-bag and the place where tickets were sold for the "grand drawing" of a piece of Rogers statuary, representing two old codgers at a heartbreaking game of checkers.

Colonel Porter was on hand as chipper as a lark, spending money like a hero and earning the blessings of all the ladies. He kept away from the grab-bag until he saw Elder Blivins standing by, and then he sailed up. He allowed that he wanted the gold ring that was said to be in the bag, and he paid his money and took a draw. He got a birchbark napkin ring tied with a yellow ribbon.

"Pshaw, Elder," said the colonel, looking old Blivins right in the eye, "this is a hideous game of chance."

The Elder blinked a moment, as if he were trying to think of something, but he never yipped.

"Come on, Elder," said the colonel heartily. "I want that Rogers group the worst way. One of the old bucks looks just like my grandfather used to when grandmother wigged him. I'm willing to gamble good and hard for that group. I'll take —"

"Put up your filthy lucre, sir!" shouted the Elder. "The devil don't run this church, and there isn't going to be any drawing." So saying, he knocked off one of the heads of the Rogers group with his cane, kicked the grab-bag down the cellar door, ordered the crowd to vamoose, put out the lamps, and locked up the vestry. Then he disappeared from public view until the following Sunday, when he preached his memorable discourse on the text, "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." And they do say that Colonel Porter put a century-run dollar bill into the contribution box that day to make up for the loss the fair sustained through his little joke on the parson.

I simply mention this story of the Elder as an example of how a man's conscience for other folks may be extraordinarily active, while that section reserved for himself may be sound asleep. And some graceless individual generally holds the alarm clock.

In commenting on the Elder's sudden change of heart, Colonel Porter admitted that he was pretty hard on the old chap. "But if he was ever to reform it was time he began," he said. "Some people seem to think that it's never too late to reform or" — softly — "or to become a lawyer." This meant a story, for the colonel never chuckled except when he felt anecdotal.

"Speaking of lawyers," mused the colonel, "there's a man in Boston who's done more things, it seems to me, than any one I ever knew. He has run stores of all sorts, has been a real estate agent, a promoter, a journalist, a fiddler in an orchestra, and tuba in a band. A few years ago he opened a fish market in the winter, sold it out two days before Lent and went into the cultivation of strawberries. He couldn't be content long enough to make a success of anything. He didn't stick at any-

thing long enough to even lose money at it, to say nothing of making it. One day I met him near the Court House, hurrying along with an earnest, wrapt look in his eyes. I knew at once that he had a new call of duty, for he always began like a steam engine.

"‘Hulloa, Caldwell,’ I said, ‘what you up to?’

"‘Got to hurry to court,’ he answered.

"‘What’s up,’ I asked, ‘not in trouble, I hope?’

"‘No, indeed,’ he said. ‘But perhaps you haven’t heard. I’m in new business.’

"‘Indeed!’ I said, with as great a show of interest as I could command in a man whom I never met without learning of a change of calling. ‘What now?’

"‘Oh, I’m an expert,’ he said, proudly.

"‘My face must have expressed interrogation, for he hastened to explain. ‘An expert for legal cases, you know.’

"‘In what line?’ I ventured.

"‘Oh, anything,’ he replied. In view of his record I was free to admit mentally that his experience was no better in any one thing than in any of the others. A month or so later I was riding in an open car with

a friend of Caldwell's, when we passed that chameleon. He had a blue bag under his arm and looked happy.

" 'There's Caldwell,' I remarked. 'Wonder how he is doing as an expert witness?'

" 'Oh, he gave that up several weeks ago,' retorted my companion. 'His court attendance gave him a new inspiration. He's studying law now.'

" 'Studying law!' I cried, in amazement. 'Studying law at 65? The idiot!'

" 'I don't know about that,' said my friend. 'He may not be such a fool as he looks. I was surprised when he told me that he was going to try the bar examination next spring, and expressed it. He smiled significantly and said he guessed he'd get through all right. 'You sec,' he said, 'my wife's word is law, and she's been laying it down to me for thirty years.'"

"Hence," said the colonel, "it's never too late for some men to reform — to desert or to take to the bar."

I'm sure I have no desire to be a humming bird in life, to flit from flower to flower; but I shall not be sorry if some day a stentorian call comes to me to forsake the pork industry. I am not much of a farmer,



but I'm cock sure you can't make cider out of dried apples, and as far as taste for the business of selling pig is concerned, I'm threaded on a string from the rafters. I really think it's time that the family name was taken out of trade. Where would the "four hundred" be if the Astors and Vanderbilts and the rest of the aristocracy had stuck to the business that made them rich? It's actually indecent for the wealthy to parade the source of their prosperity to the populace.

May I venture a suggestion? Why not capitalize the Graham plant? You can do this at a figure about four times its worth, sell almost half of the stock, keep the rest and own the plant after all is done. If this isn't kicking the gizzard out of the old proverb that you can't eat your cake and have it too, I'm a Dutchman. Besides, when you are an incorporated company, or in a merger, you're respectable. The grease don't come off dividend checks. Then if, as a clincher, you give away some of your surplus to educational institutions, you've headed your family along the highway which leads to seeing your name in another part of the newspapers than the court calendar.

You certainly owe something to your descendants, for upon them depends the future of your own reputation. The original money grabber of a great family may have dug clams and robbed widows and orphans, but his memory swells into gigantic proportions when his multi-millionaire great-grandchildren know that he is so generally forgotten as to be talked about with impunity. You may not take kindly to this, but mother has social aspirations. She will probably never get any farther, personally, than an extremely pink tea, but she would be encouraged if she had some hope of being pointed to in her portrait as the grandmother of people to whom trade will be only a despised heirloom, to be stored in the garret with the haircloth sofa.

I presume that you are to stay at the Waldorf-Astoria while you linger in New York. Let me, as a dutiful son, give you a tip as to your bearing in that hostelry. Don't let on that you are a pork packer from Chicago, if you value the contents of your pocketbook. They'll skin you, dress you and salt you while you wait, if they find out your profession. And don't tell the

clerk that you're the father of Pierrepont Graham who stopped at his hotel for awhile, a little over a year ago. I believe there's still a little something due for extras from that visit of mine, and I am considerate enough not to want to get you into any muss about that robber baron bill.

You are somewhat of a stranger in New York, and I want to caution you against travelling around town exposing your massive gold chain with the hog watch-charm you affect. Somehow a sucker is viewed by the amount of yellow metal he displays on his vest, and I don't want to hear that you have been treated to knock-out drops or tapped on the cranium with a sandbag, just because you look like a guy with an inflated wallet. All I ask of you is, that you get back safe to Chicago to straighten out the business. Since I have assumed control of the lard department there have been two strikes and one lock-out in our branch of the business, and I don't know whether to close down the department altogether or to raise everybody's wages and make it up on the quality of the lard. Even Ma is beginning to kick, for she says she

has a life interest in the business and she can't see why your rheumatism should be allowed to cut her dividends in two. I read her your excellent advice as to the sin of worrying, but it had no effect on her. She says that any woman who has a gallivanting husband and a fool son has the right to worry, and that she will keep right at it until you drive up to the door, when she will give you a welcome home that you will remember. Perhaps you had better come in by the back entrance and let her discover you in bed suffering the tortures of the damned, as they say in novels. Nothing disarms a woman like a man keeled over by disease.

In any event, don't tell her the truth about your European trip and its little enjoyments. If you do, you may have something like the experience of Henry Bagshot. As you, I have reason to believe, know, Bagshot is an habitual poker player—one of the kind who'd rather sit up all night saying, "that's good," than make fifty thousand by a *coup* on the Exchange. In twenty-seven years of married life, it seems he has concealed from Mrs. B. his feverish anxiety to draw one card for

the middle, and has always had some good excuse for his late sessions. But about a month ago he had a bad attack with his heart and the doctor who pulled him through warned him that life was not eternal in his case any more than with the rest of us.

It gave Bagshot a creepy feeling to see the "Gates Ajar," and for a couple of weeks, when his fingers itched for the chips, he let it go at scratching. When he fell there was a terrible thud and it was 4 A. M. when he crawled into the family mansion. Mrs. B. was sitting up. She had feared the worst. A compunction of conscience, due to the graveyard suggestion of his medical advisor, struck Bagshot when the lady of his choice propounded the usual conundrum and he weakened. His carefully prepared explanation stuck in his throat and he blurted out: "Very sorry, my dear, but the fact is I got into a game of poker at the club and—and I won eighty-five. Here they are, buy yourself something." And he dropped the greenbacks into Mrs. B's lap.

Then there *was* a scene. She didn't believe him and could not be induced to do so. "Henry Bagshot," she cried, "in twenty-

seven years you've never stayed away from home to play poker. It was not cards, but some awful hussy!" and she had hysterics till daylight and it cost Bagshot \$2,500 for a new brougham and a span of horses before he could get away to breakfast. Whatever happens, no husband should tell the truth to his wife. Either she'd not believe him or the shock would kill her.

Your cautious son,  
PIERREPONT.

P. S. I wrote George Damon congratulations on his marriage to Verbena Philpot, the girl, you remember, whose father insisted that I should be his son-in law. The letter evidently followed him to Europe where the happy couple appear to have gone, for the other day I received this cablegram: "Letter received. Congratulations belong to you."



LETTER NO. XIX.





## LETTER No. XIX.

*Pierrepont tells the governor "what's what" about Helen Heath and cites an example of matrimonial felicity secured by peculiar methods pursued by the husband.*

CHICAGO, Nov. 7, 189—

*Dear Father :*

You want to know who's Helen Heath and what's what about her. Well, sir, I can tell you right off the reel that she's the dearest girl on earth, and that she has promised to be my life antidote against the hog trade. She's the daughter of old General Heath, who hasn't a red cent to his name, and she hasn't a prospect in the world other than that of being your daughter-in-law, which is about as near to a settled fact as anything this side of heaven. That's who she is and that's what's what.

But *what* she is, I can't begin to tell you, and I don't believe you'd care to read it if I did. I find that a year and a half in Graham & Co. has sadly dulled my once

radiant and classic vocabulary, and that the things I want to say about Helen keep getting tainted with the aroma of the trying-out vats and the smell of gloomy, gray sausages. It's no use, father, love and pork packing never did go together and never will. And you probably know without my telling you one article of food that will never appear on my Helen's table.

But of course you do not need any rhapsody from me, for you know Helen already, and you admit that she's a peach, which is a pretty extreme thing for a man of your strength of mind to do. You say she treated you like a father on the voyage home. She had her cue, and I'm glad to find that our little game worked. Of course I wrote to London, where she has been staying for a month or two, giving her a tip on the steamer you were to take. I knew that if I broached the subject of Helen to you in the regular, orthodox way, you would fly into a tantrum and swear that no son of yours should ever marry the daughter of a penniless old lush like the general, no matter how sweet and worthy she herself might be. So I told Helen to get next you in a casual way, sparing no sugar in the

process. From what you say, I should think she had used molasses instead, and if a man could reasonably be jealous of his own father, you'd certainly be the Cassio of our little play.

Your observation that love in a flat with fifty a week isn't very bad, is interesting and no doubt true, but it's open to correction. Suppose we amend it by substituting the words "seventy-five" for "fifty," and then pass it without a dissenting vote. And the house gives notice that the governor need not object, because we shall certainly pass the bill over his head if he does.

Of course, as you say, a wife doubles a man's expenses, but she doesn't begin to increase them as a "best girl" does. I think that's why a good many men marry young, especially those with a provident streak in them. They want to get to saving money as soon as possible; flowers and candy and books and theatres and carriages and suppers are pretty apt to average more than rent, frugal board and modest clothes. Of course, my wife is going to look decent, but there are a few things around which I am going to draw a

good strong line. I shall lay down the proposition that a woman's hat ought not to cost more than four times what I pay for mine, which lasts a good deal longer. However, I believe Helen has a knack toward millinery which it will be well to encourage. If you tell your wife she's artistic, she'll work her fingers off to prove it to you.

I have some very decided ideas on the conduct of the matrimonial partnership, and I propose to see that they are carried into effect. I do not mean to be a martinet, but I've kept my eyes open at home and abroad — especially at home — and I think I can say without egotism that I know a thing or two about married life. There is always an easy way for a man to be master in his own house. Although Dame Nature has not given me the same physical handicap as Homer Aristotle Eaton, the stockbroker, I fancy there is a good tip in his methods of home rule. Eaton, as you know, is a very little man, and, by one of the freaks of Cupid, he is married to a particularly fine specimen of the genus Amazon. Indeed, when they go out driving together, their outfit looks like

one of those newspaper puzzle pictures: "find the missing man," you know.

But although Mrs. E. is a masterful sort of woman, whose look would seem enough to annihilate the remaining sixteenth of their domestic unit, it is common knowledge that Homer Aristotle Eaton is the boss of his family ward. I used to think that this might be awe of the portentous name with which his parents cursed him, but his junior partner, Giles Corey, let the Angora out of the suit case the other night at a heart party — one of those affairs where hearts are the souvenirs and the play is to get as few of them as possible.

"Yes," said Giles, in a pause for refreshments, "Eaton's high card in *his* deck. He's pretty fussy and wants things his own way. And he's had them so for his eleven years of married life.

"With that queenly woman!" cried one of the party.

"She could annihilate him with a look," said another.

"Ah, that's just it," was Giles' reply. "He don't give her a chance. You see, fellows, it's this way. The first time, years ago, that there was a difference between

them, Eaton dropped the subject and came down town. Two or three hours later he called Mrs. E. on the 'phone. He was in the booth fully three-quarters of an hour and when he came out his face was as red as a boiled lobster. But, as I happen to know, he won his point. It was about inviting a certain man and his wife to dinner. Mrs. Eaton objected because they were not in her set. Eaton wanted them because the man was nibbling at his bait in a big deal. They went to the dinner."

As there were several married men in the gathering, Corey was bombarded with questions as to his partner's secret. At last he said: "Well, I'll tell you, if you'll never quote me as your authority."

As you, father, can be depended upon for secrecy, I am not violating confidence.

"You see," said Corey, "Homer has a big bass voice and he could argue the Sphinx out of the sand or a New Yorker out of his conceit. The combination of voice and argument is irresistible — through the telephone — and Mrs. Eaton always wilts when he's held the line for a few minutes. Meek as Moses at home, he's a tyrant over his private wire. I honestly think that he has

Mrs. E. hypnotized and that the sound of his ring puts her in a receptive mood. Homer confessed as much to me one day when he said, 'Giles, my boy, the puny little man with a bass voice finds his best friend in the telephone.'

Although I am not in the light-weight class, and favor in voice Jean rather than Edouard de Reszke, I think I can see a valuable suggestion in the Homer-Aristotle-Eaton method. An argument conducted from a distance certainly cannot end in woman's last resource and most potent argument — tears. I trust you will not fancy that I anticipate any domestic infelicity. I am only following your rule of being well prepared for all emergencies. I certainly intend to be a kind, loving, and — within my rights — pliable husband. Helen is a sweet-natured girl, but I don't expect her to be all sugar-cane and molasses. She'll scarcely equal in complacence the wife of a few very unhappy years, who, when her friends advised her to leave the husband who neglected and abused her, stood up in his defence and insisted that he was far kinder than they thought.

"Why," she said, "it was only a few



months ago that he celebrated the anniversary of our marriage—our wooden wedding.”

This was too much for her sister, who had spent several weeks with her at the time, to stand. “Wooden wedding, indeed!” she cried; “the only wooden wedding you had was when your brute of a husband came home and knocked you down with a chair!”

It is surprising what a different thing the world becomes when a fellow is in love. I don’t want to be a silly ass just because the prettiest, dearest girl on the footstool said “yes” instead of the “no” I really deserved, but I must tell somebody how happy I am. If I had money enough and was a sort of czar at whom people couldn’t laugh without arrest for *lese majeste*, I’d have all the church bells rung, fire salutes on the lake front and send up balloons with Helen’s name on ’em in twenty-seven foot letters. Until I met Helen Heath I thought I should never marry; in fact, I considered myself immune. But I hadn’t seen her three times before she had me under her thumb, and the minute a girl has a fellow there, he, strangely enough, wants her hand.

And I'm to have it and her heart with it, and she — well, she's to have me and the fifty per that you dole out to me. Occasionally I have the blues, declare that I'm not fit for her and feel as I felt on the road when I finally buncoed some confiding grocer to order a bill of our goods.

I'm in a pretty tough dilemma, anyway, and unless you help me out I'll have difficulty in keeping my footing. When a fellow's head over heels in love and up to his ears in debt, it's certainly time for somebody to throw him a life-preserver. You, my dear father, can knock the cork jackets off all the coastguards in the service in this particular branch of the life-saving business, by just getting your fountain pen busy over a check-book. And how you would be repaid! We — and ours — would bless you far down the thundering ages. Think it over and cut your Boston visit short. I'm afraid for you in the Hub, anyway. You are very likely to get into trouble. Do you know, for instance, that it is believed by the best Boston families that capital punishment is a very light penalty for committing a solecism? Pray be careful. I do not wish to inherit through a tragedy.

You will find me more serious than I used to be. Perhaps this is due in part to my realization of the responsibility that I am about to assume in the way of a father-in-law. General Heath is very friendly — indeed, I may say that we are on a very intimate understanding. I have already grown to know him so well that I am usually able to anticipate his wishes — that is, when I have the price. I confess it is hard work to affect an interest in the story of the only battle in which he appears to have participated, on hearing it for the fourteenth time. But every rose has its thorn, and Helen Heath has the General. I have a friend or two at Washington, and, as you have several more, perhaps between us we shall be able to prove to him that republics are not always ungrateful. I think a South American or Pacific Island consulate would express the nation's gratitude with agreeable significance.

When I put a plain gold ring under the diamond that I gave Helen — and which, I regret to say, is not yet paid for — I do not propose to marry her distinguished but slightly disheveled pater. The constant recital of that battle story might not de-

stroy domestic felicity, but it would certainly give it an unsettled feeling. You might send him on the road if the government proves unmindful of its debt to him. He is fond of travelling, and he could scarcely sell less goods than I did.

Of course, I'm glad you think Helen pretty and nice, but now that you know my intentions I shall rely upon your sense of good taste and the fitness of things to moderate your raptures. I agree with you that there is nothing in the theory that two can live cheaper than one. I wouldn't have one — that is, *the* one — live on what I have been receiving since I accepted a position with your house. I intend that my wife shall feel that she is the real thing. While there are many signs to prove that Helen is not extravagant — thanks to the General, she's had no practice — she must not be pointed out on the street as your daughter-in-law and comments made in this vein: "How can that rich John Graham let her dress like that or live so!"

You will not allow that, I know, for, with all your abstruse theories about economy and self-help, you'll appreciate that it is due to you to see to it that your only

daughter is a credit to you. It would be a pretty bad advertisement for the business to have a dowdy daughter-in-law living in a dowdy neighborhood, now wouldn't it? And if we must be identified with the pork industry, there should be compensation. But we can discuss these things better when we are face to face.

Your enamoured son,  
Pierrepont.

P. S. I'm so happy and at peace with all the world that if I thought it would please him I'd invite Milligan to be my best man.

LETTER NO. XX.



## LETTER No. XX.

*Pierrepont's philosophy on matrimony is somewhat colored by the fact that he is a Benedict and it is evident that henceforth he will be too busy to write letters.*

CHICAGO, Nov. 13, 189—

*Dear Father:*

The seventy-five dollars a week that you promised me in yours of the 11th inst., are already mine, for there isn't any Helen Heath now. There *is* a Mrs. Pierrepont Graham, whose first name is Helen, and I guess you'll find her pretty nearly the same young woman who took you into camp so neatly on the voyage to New York. She reached Chicago five days ago, and her glowing reports about your subjugation, backed up by your promise to raise me to seventy-five on the day I married Helen Heath, decided us to plunge into the sea of matrimony before we stopped to find whether the water was cold or not. It wasn't, as it happened; but that's another affair.



Our wedding was a quiet affair, and would have pleased you by its utter lack of ostentation. We took a carriage at Helen's house and drove to the home of old Dr. Ramage, the superannuated Methodist parson, who is glad to eke out his stipend by marrying and no questions asked. Somehow General Heath got wind of what was going forward, and he sent out a line of scouts to reconnoitre our movements. One of his men intersected our line at Clark street, and an orderly was immediately despatched on a street-car to the general with the news in cipher. The gallant old commander mounted a hansom and proceeded on the double-quick to our temporary camp — otherwise the parlor of Dr. Ramage. He moved on us in good order, and charged our intrenchments just as the doctor was asking Helen if she would love, cherish and obey. He was in high good spirits — in fact, I should say that good spirits were high in him by the change in the atmosphere after he arrived — and he insisted that the ceremony be begun all over again, so that he shouldn't lose a single syllable. I am glad to find that the old boy is highly pleased

by my alliance with his noble family. He cracked a joke to the effect that his side of the house had the blood and ours the pork, and that the combination would be irresistible; but I was too much absorbed in my own happiness just then to feel hurt. He wanted to know when you were coming home, as he had a very important business scheme to propose to you. If I were you I'd let him have ten or fifteen thousand for the sake of Helen, who is a dear girl, and takes after her mother.

The going home to Ma was something of a trial, and if Helen hadn't been a mighty sensible girl, she'd have declined to stay in the house a single night. Ma cut up badly because there had been no bridesmaids nor wedding-cake, and when I quoted your endorsement of a speedy marriage, she said you were an old fool, who, if you had stopped to think, would probably never have got married yourself. I couldn't just see where she complimented herself very much by that, but I didn't try to show her the errors of her logic just then. I just bucked up and gave her a tremendous steer about the romance that must be in her nature, although perhaps long dor-

mant from the force of circumstances. This veiled allusion to you mollified Ma a good deal, and pretty soon she calmed down completely and asked us to come in and stay as long as we liked.

We made a very merry little party after all. Ma sent out to a caterer's for a good spread and produced some champagne in some mysterious manner—I'd no idea there was any in the house. Pretty soon the General turned up and Ma was wonderfully cordial. She even brought him a bottle of your 1830 Private Stock, and the way stock went down would have tickled the bears on 'Change half to death. The General was good enough to say, before we escorted him to his chamber, that your taste in such things was impeccable—that was his very word, "impeccable, sir." I can't refrain from telling you that he made a deep impression on Ma, and I think if I were you I wouldn't linger in Boston too long.

Do you know that your last letter, so full of philosophy as applied to matrimony, has set me to wondering what has made you such an expert on wives. You talk of nagging women, and sulky women, and ,

violent women, quite as if by the book. Where your vast experience in such matters has come from I can't quite make out. At any rate I want it distinctly understood that it mustn't be taken as reflecting on Ma. Ma is now ace high with Mr. and Mrs. Pierrepont Graham, having proven herself a true thoroughbred. She has cleaned the house entirely of Graham food products, sending them all to the Home for Half Orphans, has hired a decent cook in place of your Scandinavian horror, and allows that she likes the smell of cigars in the drawing-room. From this on, my vote is for Ma, no matter what office she may run for.

I may mention in passing that Ma said a rather curious thing the other day, which you may be able to explain. I had made some foolish remark about getting a divorce because of something Helen had said, and Ma reproved me for it. I laughed and said to Helen, "Mother never could take a joke."

This evidently displeased Ma, for she replied, "You seem to have forgotten, Pierrepont, that I married your father."

Women are queer creatures, anyhow.

You are everlastingly right, father, in what you say about the undesirability of having them in places of business. I took Helen to the packing house to-day, intending to show her through the establishment. But one glance at the luckless hogs "travelling into dry salt at the rate of one a minute," as you once so poetically expressed it, drove all idea of further investigation out of her pretty head. She said she'd take for granted all the wonderful facts of sausage and lard, and proposed lunch at the Palmer House instead. So you see, my little experiment took some valuable time out of the house. Helen goes further than either of us in this distaste for women in business and says she doesn't think we ought to have girl typewriters. That was after she caught sight of mine, who isn't the worst ever, as you know.

But, so far, I am pleased to state, the honeymoon has not waned an atom. We are keeping pretty close to the house, for what a shock it would be to society if they knew we had been married without hustling off on a wedding tour. The bridal trip business has always struck me as nonsensical. The way people act after the

minister gives the word, you would think that they hated the place where they determined upon the irrevocable step. After you get home and certain matters are adjusted, I think I would like to go to Europe. You see, Helen has been there and no man likes to be at a disadvantage with his wife.

You may feel more friendly towards this foreign tour when I tell you that since Helen forsook her native Heath she has become very confidential with me and has told me some of the particulars of her first meeting with you. I just naturally am pleased with the details, for it is extremely gratifying to a man to feel that his father corroborates his good taste in the selection of the girl of his choice. It is certainly most creditable to the largeness of your paternal heart that you should have paid her so much attention in the first few days out of Liverpool. It was a great courtesy for you to arrange her tray for her on deck and to relieve her of the necessity of seeing the stewards.

Equally kind was your aid in adjusting her wrap on the windy afternoon that you sat alone with her in the lee of the smoke-stack. But it was unfortunate, was it not,

that your forgetfulness in not withdrawing your arm from the back of her steamer chair was called to your attention by Helen's chance remark that she was acquainted with me? Mother has never been abroad, so I have not told her of your gallantry to your fellow-passenger. She might not understand steamer conventions. Helen, perhaps, might mention the matter to her casually. If we go abroad, as I suggest to you, I will take special pains to destroy her entire recollection of the trip with you.

Oh, by the way, it occurs to me to tell you that Cy Willoughby — the widower, not his brother Seth — has disinherited his son Arthur, because he married a typewriter. It was not because of the *mésalliance*, but it was because it was the *father's* typewriter that Arthur married. Possibly, when I think of Helen, I should have more than the dictates of filial affection as a reason for gratitude that Ma did not succumb a year ago last winter to pneumonia and the six doctors you insisted on having. As you so succinctly express it, Helen is not getting any the best of it in marrying me. Her pater may not be very much of a

financial proposition, and more of a bottle than a battle-scarred warrior, but he can talk about his great-grandfather, and that's more than you care to do, I fancy. Blood may not amount to much, except in race-horses, but when you balance things up, by and large, neither of the two families need to take off their hats to the other. I'm glad Helen has a family whose pictures she's not afraid to show, for it sort of evens things up for our money. (I note that I have omitted the "y" before "our," but you will understand that it belongs there.)

I gather from your last letter that your curiosity is aroused as to how I proposed. I did it in person. It happened at a dance. I told Helen the other day that she really paved the way for my proposal, but I saw by the look on her face that it would not be safe to pursue the subject, so I turned it off with a jest. You will judge. When it came time to dance the cotillion she said she was tired, and that, anyway, she knew a better step than any that would be danced. So we went out into the hallway and she showed me the step, which was on the stairs, and we sat there till the cotillion was over.



When we returned to the ballroom she had me guessing as to where I would get the engagement ring, for though love is blind, it's not stone-blind — not if the stone is a diamond.

As for what I said, well, I wouldn't repeat it, even if I remembered it. I guess I must have talked a lot of rot. I referred to it once in a casual way and Helen burst out laughing. I recall that she didn't laugh at the time. She probably realized that laughter is apt to scare away fish.

I am very happy, for I have discovered that your daughter-in-law is not perfect, and that makes the inequality between us seem a trifle less. She cried yesterday, and said I was unkind, and all because when we were planning the house that I have decided you shall build for us, I suggested that she lay out the clothes-closets and have the architect draw his plans around them. It is evident that repartee is not always appreciated in the family circle.

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I was interrupted yesterday by a call to settle a dispute between Helen and Ma, as to whether it is good form for a young

married woman to invite lady friends who are strangers to her husband to call informally before they have been introduced to him. What could I do? I looked wise and said it was a grave point. I said I would consult the society editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and went out, ostensibly to send a wire to Bok.

When I returned I found my wife in tears—second crop. She had read the concluding pages of this letter—justified her conduct by the observation that there should be no secrets between husband and wife. She takes exceptions to what I have written you about my proposal. I am finishing this letter down town. I am now going to 'phone Helen to see if I can come home to dinner.

Your Benedict son,  
Pierrepont.

P.S. You need not consider it necessary to continue your advisory letters to me. I can see that I will receive all the advice I need from Mrs. Pierrepont.









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